DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 276 925 CG 019 542

AUTHOR Keith, Joanne; And Others
TITLE Michigan Early Adolescent Survey: Final Report.
INSTITUTION Michigan State Univ., East Lansing. Cooperative Extension Service.
REPORT NO 4-H-1338
PUB DATE [85]
NOTE 62p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the National Council on Family Relations (Dearborn, MI, November 3-7, 1986).
AVAILABLE FROM Cooperative Extension Service, Michigan State University, Bulletin Office, Box 6640, East Lansing, Michigan 48823 ($3.00).
PUB TYPE Reports - Research/Technical (143) -- Speeches/Conference Papers (150)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC03 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Adolescent Development; *Adolescents; Coping; *Family Relationship; *Leisure Time; Needs Assessment; *Parent Attitudes; *Self Esteem; Sex Role; State Surveys; Stress Variables; *Youth Programs
IDENTIFIERS *Michigan

ABSTRACT

This document contains the final report from the Michigan Early Adolescent Survey, a study undertaken to: (1) develop a profile of Michigan early adolescents that focused on out-of-school time and included biological, psychological, and sociological information; (2) develop a profile of families which included early adolescents; (3) assess the developmental needs of Michigan early adolescents and their families; (4) identify how early adolescents used their out-of-school time and how they would like to use it; and (5) gain information related to specific 4-H Youth Programs topics. Data presented in the report are results of a state-wide survey of 304 early adolescents and their parents conducted in 1983. Descriptive findings are reported on self-esteem, self-management, career exploration, sex role attitudes, and stress and coping. In relation to the early adolescent in the family, findings are reported on the topics of family communication, relationships, time and activities, parental expectations for early adolescents, and parental needs for help with teaching their youth skills. Topics related to outside of school activities are after school care, youth groups, out-of-school classes, and television. The last section gives the findings on early adolescents and handicappers, school, pets, and snacks and nutrition. (NB)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED276925

ADOLESCENT SURVEY

FINAL REPORT

CG 019542

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☑ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Joanne Keith

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

4-H 1338

MICHIGAN EARLY ADOLESCENT SURVEY

FINAL REPORT

Conducted by: The Department of Family and Child Ecology
and 4-H - Youth Programs, Cooperative Extension Service
Michigan State University

With support from the Agricultural Experiment Station
and the Cooperative Extension Service
Michigan State University

Joanne Keith, Ph.D., Department of Family and Child Ecology

Leah Hoopfer, Ph.D., 4-H - Youth Programs

Christine Nelson, Anita Miller Covert, and Linda Bond
Research Assistants
Department of Family and Child Ecology

MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY
ES
COOPERATIVE EXTENSION SERVICE

MSU is an Affirmative Action/Equal Opportunity Institution. Michigan 4-H — Youth educational programs and all other Cooperative Extension programs are available to all without regard to race, color, national origin, sex, or handicap.

Issued in furtherance of Cooperative Extension work, acts of May 8 and June 30, 1914, in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Gordon E. Guyer, Director, Cooperative Extension Service, Michigan State University, East Lansing, MI 48824.

This information is for educational purposes only. Reference to commercial products or trade names does not imply endorsement by the Cooperative Extension Service or bias against those not mentioned. This bulletin becomes public property upon publication and may be reprinted verbatim as a separate or within another publication with credit to MSU. Reprint cannot be used to endorse or advertise a commercial product or company.

Price $3.00 1P-1.5M-3:85-LB-JRO

CONTENTS

	Page
INTRODUCTION	1
Why Study Early Adolescence?	1
MEAS Goals	3
HOW THE SURVEY WAS CONDUCTED	4
The Interview and Questionnaire	4
Sample Selection	4
DEVELOPMENTAL TASKS OF EARLY ADOLESCENCE	5
Summary of Tasks	5
Highlights: Developmental Tasks	7
Self-Esteem	8
Self-Management	11
Career Exploration	18
Sex Role Attitudes: Masculine and Feminine Qualities	22
Stress and Coping	24
THE EARLY ADOLESCENT IN THE FAMILY	27
Highlights: The Early Adolescent in the Family	28
Family Communication	29
Family Relationships	32
Family Time and Activities	35
Parental Expectations for Early Adolescence	38
Early Adolescent Skill Development: Parental Needs for Help Outside the Home	39
EARLY ADOLESCENT ACTIVITIES OUTSIDE OF SCHOOL	41
Highlights: Activities Outside of School	42
After-School Care	43
Youth Groups	44
Outside-of-School Classes and Activities	46
Television	49
SELECTED TOPICS OF INTEREST TO THE 4-H - YOUTH PROGRAMS	51
Highlights: Selected Topics of Interest to the 4-H - Youth Programs	52
Early Adolescents and Handicappers	53
Early Adolescents and School	54
Early Adolescents and Their Pets	56
Snacks and Nutrition	57
APPENDIX - Description of Sample	58

INTRODUCTION

The planning for a statewide survey of Michigan early adolescents began in the spring of 1982. Concerned with the lack of information on which to base programs, Joanne Keith from the Department of Family and Child Ecology at Michigan State University and Leah Hoopfer from the Michigan 4-H - Youth Programs proposed that 300 Michigan early adolescents and their parents be surveyed to answer a number of questions about Michigan youths at this age. The questions were related to the developmental needs of early adolescents, early adolescents in their families, and out-of-school and selected topics of interest to 4-H - Youth Programs.

The survey, called the Michigan Early Adolescent Survey (MEAS), was conducted in the spring of 1983. Information was collected about each of the 300 early adolescents and two of the environments surrounding him or her: the family and outside-of-school time. In addition, several topics of interest to the 4-H - Youth Programs were included. In the area of developmental needs, early adolescents provided information related to self-esteem, self-management and responsibility, career exploration, sex role attitudes, and stress and coping. Parents provided information on their attitudes toward early adolescence, help needed with building skills of early adolescents and family relationships, communication, and activities. Out-of-school activities, after-school care, youth club participation, and television viewing were examined. Topics of special interest to the 4-H - Youth Programs were families with handicapper members, animals, nutrition, and school. The findings are reported here. Significant differences are indicated by * (significant at the 0.05 level), ** (significant at the 0.01 level), and *** (significant at the 0.001 level).

This project is the culmination of the talents, skills, and time of many people and organizations. Funded by the Michigan State University Agricultural Experiment Station and Cooperative Extension Service, the project brought together the research expertise of the Department of Family and Child Ecology and the networking, knowledge, and "people" skills of the Cooperative Extension Service and 4-H - Youth Programs. Eighty volunteers were trained to conduct interviews and thus shared their skills and time. And, of course, the study would have been impossible without the 300 families that shared their time and lives so that those interested in early adolescents and their families would have sound information on which to build programs.

Why Study Early Adolescence?

There are many reasons to study those years between ages 10 and 14--early adolescence--as a separate stage of development. The most apparent one is that this is the time of children's lives when they experience their second greatest rates of physical growth. These years include part of puberty, a time when children's bodies change to those of young men and women. Although puberty has always occurred, it is occurring earlier in children now than it did in the past.

At the end of this period, children's minds also are becoming more adult-like. They are more able to think abstractly, to do what Piaget called "formal thinking." This ability opens up a new world for early adolescents--a

world that is no longer bound to the here and now. Early adolescents begin to idealize and analyze, and they often become more interested in politics and related "issues" based on their new ability to think more formally.

These changes in the physical and cognitive growth of the child are accompanied by social changes as well. It is at this time in life that a child begins to venture into the world as he/she hasn't been allowed to in the past. There is a shift from a somewhat close (physically and emotionally) elementary school to a middle school or junior high which is more autonomous and anonymous in nature. Most early adolescents develop strong peer relationships which are often seen as competing with family relationships. Although this is not necessarily the case, these peer relationships do begin to prepare the early adolescent for a time when he/she will be leaving the family to be on his/her own.

It is obvious that early adolescence is a separate time and that it is marked by physical, cognitive, and social changes in the adolescent. However, not only is the early adolescent changing, but American society and families are changing rapidly, too. Specific trends which affect early adolescent development are:

-The increase in the number and percentage of households in which all adults are employed outside the home

-The increase in divorced parent, single parent, and remarried parent households

-Smaller numbers of children in families

-Wide expansion of electronic media

-Less human labor needed in the home

-Widening opportunities in education

-Increasing availability of leisure time activities

-Delayed entrance into full-time employment

-Increased family mobility

These trends, when considered simultaneously, show that American society is growing more complex. Because of this, early adolescents and families have more decisions to make than ever before. To what extent are these trends an advantage or disadvantage to the development of early adolescents? There is growing concern among parents as well as professionals that some of these trends have distinct disadvantages for early adolescents. But, which ones?

Two other issues also indicate a need to study early adolescents as a separate group. The first is the need for research that looks at the early adolescent outside of school. There is a large body of information that discusses early adolescents and school. However, much less information exists about early adolescents and their families or out-of-school time. The other issue concerns adolescence as a time of "storm and stress." Much of the adolescent research has been conducted on clinical populations or is highly

theoretical. This research led to the idea that this age span is one that is particularly difficult for adolescents and those around them. The study of "normal" development needs to be done to see to what extent it is true of a nonclinical population.

MEAS Goals

In order to know and understand this little known and sometimes misunderstood stage of life, the Michigan Early Adolescent Survey was conducted. The objectives of the study were to:

-Develop a profile of Michigan early adolescents that focuses on out-of-school time and includes biological, psychological, and sociological information.

-Develop a profile of families which include early adolescents.

-Assess the developmental needs of Michigan early adolescents and their families.

-Identify how early adolescents use their out-of-school time and how they would like to use it.

-Gain information related to specific 4-H - Youth Programs topics.

HOW THE SURVEY WAS CONDUCTED

The Michigan Early Adolescent Survey was a cross-sectional survey of 304 Michigan early adolescents and their families. Early adolescents were interviewed by trained volunteers while their parents completed questionnaires in the family's home. Interviews took about one hour.

Interviewers were recruited from the 20 participating counties by county 4-H agents and program assistants. As volunteers, the interviewers were trained in a 10-hour session over two days in February 1983. They learned about early adolescents, the interview questions, and how to interview. They critiqued videotaped interviews and interviewed early adolescents in a group. They also became familiar with the parent questionnaire so they could answer questions if needed.

At the end of the training, letters were sent to each potential family which told them about the research project and that they might be called to be a part of it. Families were then contacted by phone and asked if they would like to participate.

The Interview and Questionnaire

Questions for the interview and questionnaire were chosen in two ways. Some were created specifically for the study and some were selected from other tests and questionnaires. These are discussed in the findings.

Sample Selection

Early adolescents were chosen for this study using a stratified multistage cluster sampling technique and an equal probability selection method. This means that the study was conducted in such a way that all Michigan early adolescents in public and private schools who lived with their families had an equal chance of being chosen for the study. This also means that the sample provides reliable information about all Michigan early adolescents.

Twenty counties were chosen using the method described above. Two school districts were then chosen from each county. Student names were selected from lists provided from those school districts.

This sample included 304 youths--150 boys and 154 girls. There were 78 fifth graders, 70 sixth graders, 77 seventh graders, and 79 eighth graders. Of the 495 parents interviewed, 283 were mothers and 212 were fathers. A complete description of the sample is included in the appendix on page 58.

DEVELOPMENTAL TASKS OF EARLY ADOLESCENCE

Six issues are identified by John Hill[1] as the primary developmental tasks of early adolescence. These are attachment, autonomy, sexuality, intimacy, achievement, and identity. These issues arise out of the primary changes (biological, psychological, and sociological) which occur during this stage of development.

Four of these issues--attachment, autonomy, achievement and identity--were considered when the early adolescent interview was prepared, and many of the questions and sections are related to one or several of these issues. Sexuality and intimacy were not considered to be within the scope of this project.

The following is a brief summary of the issues considered in the Michigan Early Adolescent Survey as adapted from Hill.

Summary of Tasks

ATTACHMENT

Attachment is an issue concerning parent and early adolescent relationships. In childhood, most children develop a large degree of emotional dependence (attachment) upon their parents. They view their parents as all-providing and all-powerful. From a psychoanalytic viewpoint, the task that begins in early adolescence is that of "disengagement," a decrease in the strong attachment that children feel for their parents. This change is necessary so that as young adults, they can establish satisfactory relationships with their peers.

From a psychoanalytic point of view, the task of disengagement is one of "storm and stress." Other professionals interested in early adolescence acknowledge that disengagement is a task, but they do not believe that it is necessarily as stormy or stressful as the psychoanalytic viewpoint would have us believe. They cite research that shows that in many families, young people continue to report strong affection and respect for their parents even as they become more oriented to their peers and attached to people their own age.

AUTONOMY

Autonomy is a task that includes increased self-reliance, initiative, and responsibility for follow-through on the adolescent's part. Growth in independence is part of ongoing development that has been occurring since early childhood for most early adolescents. Self-initiating activities and decision-making in a growing social world are newer tasks that need to begin in early adolescence. Examples of these tasks are handling an allowance, meeting family obligations on time without being told, caring for younger and

---

[1]John P. Hill, Understanding Early Adolescence: A Framework (Durham, N.C.: Center for Early Adolescence, 1980).

older family members, getting jobs done (such as taking out the garbage or doing dishes), and being expected to make judgments about social situations (such as drinking or dating).

This is different from the psychoanalytic viewpoint which maintains that changes in attachment are necessary so that autonomy can occur. Autonomy is produced through rebellion. Rebellion provides a method with which the early adolescent can begin to disengage and then become autonomous. Hill states that research does not support this viewpoint. He says that most parents increase their demands through early adolescence and that those adolescents who feel most independent report the most positive relationships with their parents. Therefore, autonomy at this stage is more related to respect for parents and continued affection than to rebellion.

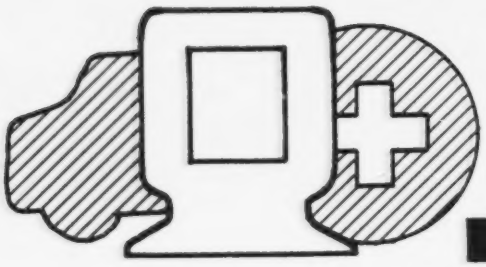
In the past, autonomy was seen to be a more important task for early adolescent males than it was for females. This fits with the traditional role of males as independent and females as dependent. Hill implies that this may never have been true. If it were true, it is probably changing today due to changes in men's and women's roles.

ACHIEVEMENT

In early adolescence, the development of vocational choices begins to become more realistic than it has in the past. Early adolescents are now likely to begin to match their personal characteristics (interests, abilities, and interpersonal styles) to job characteristics. Their new ability to anticipate the future makes it possible for them to link their present school achievement and other kinds of achievement to future possible achievements. This initial process has implications that can have far-reaching consequences. If a young man begins to define himself as an athlete as opposed to a student, he may make academic choices that leave him with fewer options at a later date. Similarly, girls who do not take math and science also have fewer options open for them later on. Gender is a critical variable in the developmental task of achievement.

IDENTITY

Identity formation becomes a central issue in adolescence because of the biological and sociological changes that demand a new sense of "self." This identity includes a conscious sense of uniqueness, an unconscious striving for a continuity of experience, and solidarity with a group's ideals. In order to achieve this new identity, the early adolescent must begin to take his/her "old" self into consideration while looking at his/her potential as an adult as well as integrating that "old" self with what others see and expect. The new social relationships that early adolescents make as they expand their social world are critical to this process, and the peer group acts as an important place for testing new identities.



HIGHLIGHTS: DEVELOPMENTAL TASKS

SELF-ESTEEM

60 percent of the youths reported positive feelings about their general self-esteem.

73 percent of the youths reported positive feelings about their peers.

72 percent of the youths reported positive feelings about their parents and families.

The self-esteem of youths was not related to the self-esteem of parents.

SELF-MANAGEMENT

Youths scored highest in the area of personal responsibility.

85 percent of parents reported that their child needs reminders to carry out family responsibilities.

The level of responsibility changes little from 10 to 14 years of age.

Girls demonstrated significantly higher levels of self-management.

CAREER EXPLORATION

90 percent of the youths had thought about what kind of job they would like.

Parents had talked more about their sons' future careers than their daughters' future careers.

Boys preferred traditionally male jobs; girls preferred traditionally female jobs.

Over 50 percent of boys and girls said that they would like to be computer programmers.

SEX ROLE ATTITUDES

Overall, early adolescents reported that the same qualities (such as independence, ambition, and nurturance) were important for men and women.

Despite this, early adolescents reported performing traditional behaviors in the areas of leisure activities, career preferences, and family responsibilities.

STRESS AND COPING

Youths reported listening to music and spending time alone to reduce stress.

Girls and boys do different things to reduce stress. Girls said that they talked to friends, wrote, cried, and talked on the phone. Boys said that they did physical activities and kept their feelings to themselves.

Self-Esteem

Erikson claims that identity, at its peak, is felt as a sense of well-being. Self-esteem--how people feel about themselves--is related very closely to this definition of identity, which is one of the developmental tasks of early adolescence.

Self-esteem is important to everything that people do. Developing and maintaining good feelings about who they are is an important developmental task for early adolescents. They bring to this developmental stage the self-esteem that they have developed thus far. However, with the large number of changes occurring in and around the early adolescent, development and maintenance of self-esteem becomes a prominent goal.

In this study, the Coopersmith Self-Esteem Inventory (Short Form) was used to measure the self-esteem of both the early adolescents and their parents. Self-esteem was analyzed as a whole; the subtopics of general self-esteem, self in relation to home and parents, and self in relation to peers were also analyzed.

In the information given below, the symbols indicate the following: (g)=general subscale item, (s)=self-peers subscale item, and (h)=home-parents subscale. A "+" indicates that the item has been reversed to calculate positive self-esteem. For example, "+(g) I give in very easily" shows that this statement is from the general self-esteem subscale. It is a negative statement to which few early adolescents answered "yes." This means that most early adolescents who have good self-esteem related to this statement.

EARLY ADOLESCENT SELF-ESTEEM

At least two-thirds of the early adolescents indicated positive self-esteem by their positive answers to the first six items listed below and by their negative answers to the remaining items:

(g) I can make up my mind without too much trouble.
(g) If I have something to say, I usually say it.
(s) I'm a lot of fun to be with.
(s) I'm popular with persons my age.
(h) My parents usually consider my feelings.
(h) My parents understand me.
+(g) I give in very easily.
+(g) Things are all mixed up in my life.
+(g) I have a low opinion of myself.
+(g) I can't be depended on.
+(h) There are many times when I would like to leave home.
+(h) I usually feel as if my parents are pushing me.
+(h) My parents expect too much of me.

One-third to two-thirds of the early adolescents reported:

+(g) I find it hard to talk in front of a group.
+(g) It takes me some time to get used to anything new.
+(g) I often feel upset with my work.

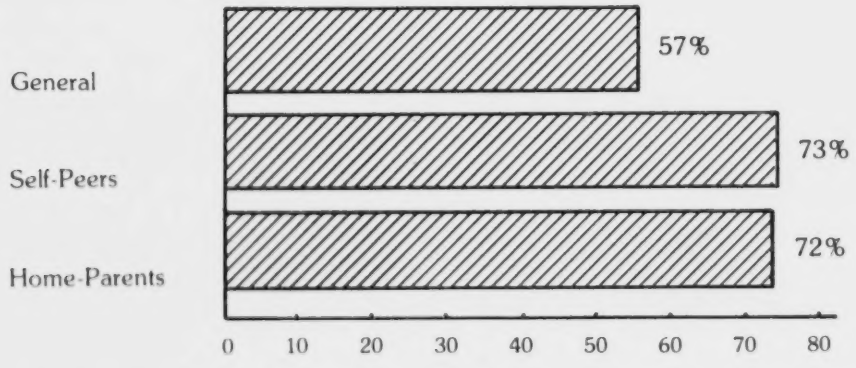
+(g) It's pretty tough to be me.
+(g) I'm not as nice looking as most people.
+(g) I often wish I were someone else.
+(g) I often get discouraged with what I am doing.
(g) Things don't usually bother me.
+(g) There are lots of things I'd change about myself if I could.
+(s) Most people are better liked than I am.
(s) People usually follow my ideas.
+(h) I get upset easily at home.

In general, the majority of the early adolescents responded that they feel good about themselves. When the answers are broken down into subscales, it is easier to identify areas about which they are feeling better or worse. Figure 1 illustrates an overall comparison of youths' self-esteem levels in the areas of general, self-peers, and home-parents.

When parents were asked if their early adolescents felt as if they were as good as other people, 60 to 65 percent said that their early adolescents did.

FIGURE 1.

Positive self-esteem levels of early adolescents.



General Self-Esteem

General self-esteem refers to the general feelings that a person has about him/herself. Statements on the Coopersmith Self-Esteem Inventory which show general self-esteem had to do with difficulty with changes, desire to change self, emotions about the self, and feelings about responsibility and decision-making. Fifty-seven percent of the youths indicated that they felt good about these qualities. Males were more likely to show significantly higher self-esteem because fewer responded positively to the following:

I'm not as nice looking as most people.*
I give in easily.*
I often wish I were someone else.*

Other studies have also reported that girls have significantly more negative feelings about their bodies at these ages.

Self-Peers

Four statements from the Coopersmith Self-Esteem Inventory were used to look at how early adolescents feel about themselves and their relationships with their friends and others their age. Seventy-three percent reported positive feelings about these relationships. There were no differences between girls and boys.

Home-Parents

Six statements from the Coopersmith Self-Esteem Inventory were used to look at how early adolescents feel about parental expectations and behaviors. Seventy-two percent of the youths reported that they felt positively about their families. Girls were more likely to show significantly higher self-esteem by fewer positive answers to the following statement: I usually feel as if my parents are pushing me.*

PARENTAL SELF-ESTEEM

Parents responded to the adult form of the Coopersmith Self-Esteem Inventory, which is very similar to the form for the child. In general, their self-esteem was higher than that of their children. On all but six items, two-thirds or more of the parents reported positive feelings of self-esteem. The items on which parents expressed less positiveness concerned talking in front of groups, coping with change, getting upset easily, how often the person is bothered by things, and giving in. Fathers were more concerned with being upset with work; mothers were more concerned with family expectations being too high.

There were significant differences between responses of mothers and fathers on four of the six family subscale statements. These are described later in the section on family relationships. One other difference between mothers and fathers was that fathers were significantly more likely to report that they made up their minds easily.*

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PARENTAL AND EARLY ADOLESCENT SELF-ESTEEM

The self-esteem of the early adolescents was examined to see if there were relationships between it and the self-esteem of parents. A low positive relationship was found. This means that although parental self-esteem may be slightly related to early adolescent self-esteem, there are other influences that are important. Pearson's correlations for the self-esteem scores were mother-daughter (.19), mother-son (.32), father-daughter (.12), and father-son (.16).

Self-Management

Self-management and responsibility are part of the same developmental task that Hill calls autonomy. Taking responsibility is considered by parents and others who work with early adolescents as one of the most important issues in the early adolescent's development.

When adults talk about youths assuming responsibility, they may be referring to behaviors ranging from keeping a neat bedroom to acting calmly in an emergency. Responsibility is not a clear-cut characteristic. In its broadest sense, it may be understood to mean some combination of self-management, self-reliance, cooperation, and a sensitivity to the feelings of others. It means that youths are doing things for themselves with self-motivation and without reminders. A long-term goal for early adolescents is that they will take increasing responsibility for all areas of their lives.

Several questions were asked to sample the types of responsibilities early adolescents carry out. The behaviors included three general categories of responsibility:

- Personal responsibility: tasks or actions which primarily affect the youth and usually involve taking appropriate action without being reminded (such as getting up on one's own, caring for personal hygiene, and doing homework).

- Family responsibility: tasks or actions carried out by the youth but which primarily affect the youth's family (such as chores around the home).

- Social responsibility: tasks involving sensitivity and caring for people beyond one's family (such as taking care of younger children or the elderly, or helping other youths or the needy).

WHAT EARLY ADOLESCENTS REPORT ABOUT THEMSELVES

In the areas of responsibility, early adolescents are highest on personal responsibility. According to parents, appearance is more important to girls than boys. Girls are also more likely to do homework without reminders.

Two items concerning youths' personal management of leisure time, television viewing, and reading for fun were included. Over 70 percent of the youths said that they watched television daily. Twenty-five percent of the boys and 41 percent of the girls said that they read for fun daily (see Fig. 2).

FIGURE 2.

Management of daily leisure time of early adolescents.

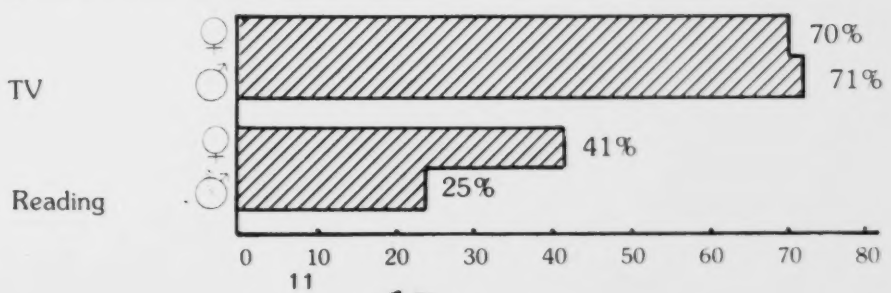
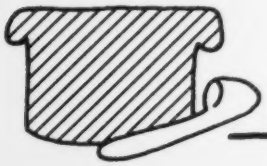
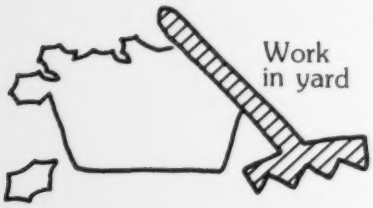
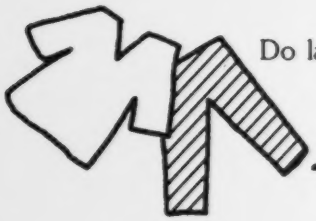


FIGURE 3.

Family responsibilities of early adolescents.*

		Most/everyday	Once/twice week	Monthly	Rarely/never
 Prepare meals	♀	17	19	22	43
	♂	19	14	25	43
Clean up after meals	♀	43	28	12	17
	♂	37	28	10	25
 Work in yard	♀	9	22	20	49
	♂	27	25	26	22
Clean, wax, fix cars	♀	2	6	20	71
	♂	6	16	23	55
Go grocery shopping	♀	6	6	10	78
	♂	6	9	5	80
Take out garbage	♀	22	22	20	37
	♂	42	38	6	13
 Do laundry	♀	10	21	19	50
	♂	6	9	4	81

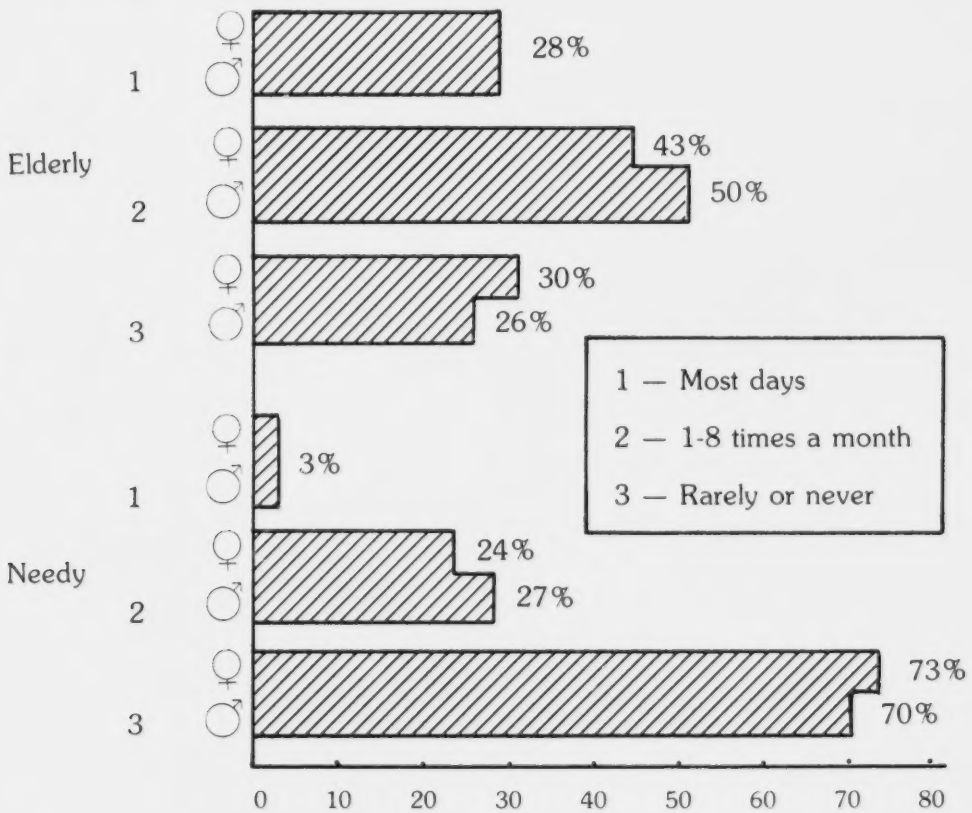
*Numbers indicate percentages.

Figure 3 illustrates the percentages of early adolescents who said that they had family responsibilities and how often they carry out those responsibilities. Early adolescents take less responsibility for family chores than their personal chores. Boys carry out about the same amount of responsibilities in the house (traditionally female tasks) as do girls. They carry out more tasks than girls do that take place outside of the house (traditionally male tasks).

In areas of social responsibility (or caring for other people), the frequency is lower than any other area of responsibility. This is to be expected since these types of activities require going outside the family and would not be likely to occur daily. Girls reported more experience in carrying out social responsibility (see Fig. 4).

FIGURE 4.

Frequency of social responsibilities of early adolescents.



WHAT PARENTS SAY ABOUT THEIR CHILDREN

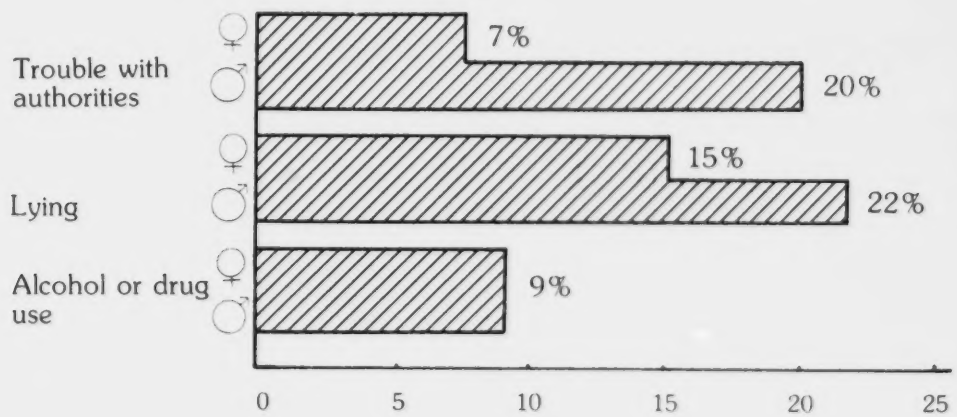
Both mothers and fathers were asked a series of questions regarding how they observed their child's behavior as it related to personal, family, and social responsibility. (Specific tasks were not included.) In general, both mothers and fathers said that about 55 percent of the girls and 42 percent of the boys carry out personal responsibilities on their own. Of the parents, 85 percent said that their child needed reminders to carry out family responsibilities. They also reported that less than 20 percent of their children have frequent experiences in carrying out social responsibility and that they would like for their children to have more opportunities to learn such skills.

When parents' responses were examined in relation to the age of the early adolescent, a surprise was found. This stage has been viewed as one during which youths take on an increasing amount of responsibility. That was not the case, however. The amount of responsibility was not significantly different between the ages of 10 and 14.

Unacceptable social behaviors (such as alcohol use, trouble with authorities, and not being truthful) might be considered negative aspects of self-management/responsibility. In averaging these items as a measure of undesirable social behavior, parents report that about 10 percent of girls and 20 percent of boys have difficulty in this area (see Fig. 5).

FIGURE 5.

Unacceptable social behavior in early adolescents.



MONEY AND SELF-MANAGEMENT

How early adolescents receive and spend money is related to the developmental task of autonomy. Money management is part of self-management and responsibility-taking. How youths earn their money can also be related to the developmental task of achievement. "First" jobs teach many skills such as promptness, appropriate dress, and accepting authority that are important to the early adolescent's later work participation.

Youths were asked several questions about the kinds of jobs that they do and how much and how often they are paid. They were also asked if they received money from their parents, how they received it, and how they spent it.

JOBS

Forty-eight percent of the girls and 33 percent of the boys said that they did some kind of work for pay (see Fig. 6). The jobs reported were babysitting, yard work, housecleaning, car washing, odd jobs, and clerking at a store. Thirteen percent said that they did their job once or twice a month, 14 percent three to four times a month, and 20 percent more often than this (see Fig. 7).

How much money early adolescents received for their work was dependent upon what they did to earn it and how often they worked. A wide range of monthly income was reported, which ranged from $1 to $159.

MONEY FROM PARENTS

Eighty-five percent of the youths said that they received money from their parents. Almost 50 percent received a regular allowance. Thirty percent received money when they asked for it. Eight percent received money in both of these ways (see Fig. 8).

One-third of the youths said that they received an allowance weekly. One-eighth reported receiving money every two weeks. Only 5 percent said that they received an allowance on a monthly basis.

One-eighth of the youths said that the amount of their allowance varied. The others reported amounts ranging from $.25 to $20 per month. Two, three, and five dollars were the most frequently reported amounts.

HOW YOUTHS SPEND THEIR MONEY

Figure 9 shows how early adolescents spend their money. The categories which showed the highest percentages are saving for a large item, gifts, and snacks. Although it appears as if there are differences between girls and boys, no statistical differences were found.

WHAT PARENTS SAY ABOUT YOUTH SPENDING

Typically, fewer parents reported that their children spent money in a specific way than did their children. Parents underestimated the amount of money boys and girls reported spending on snacks and the amount that girls spend on cosmetics. The top three categories of spending specified by the parents were the same as those specified by the children.

FIGURE 6.

Youths reporting jobs.

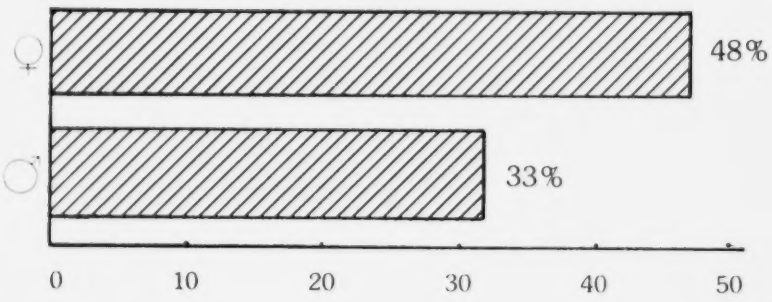


FIGURE 7.

Frequency of work (jobs).

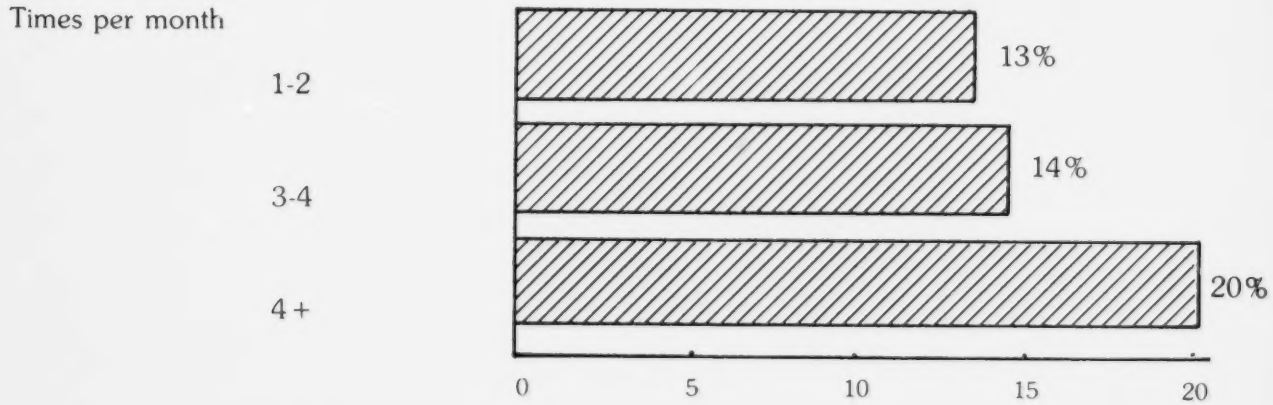


FIGURE 8.

Money from parents.

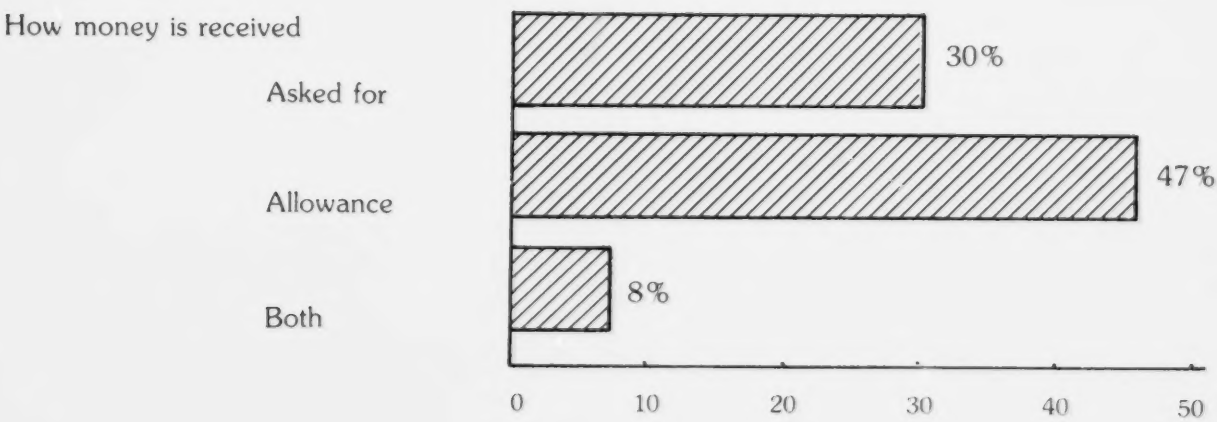
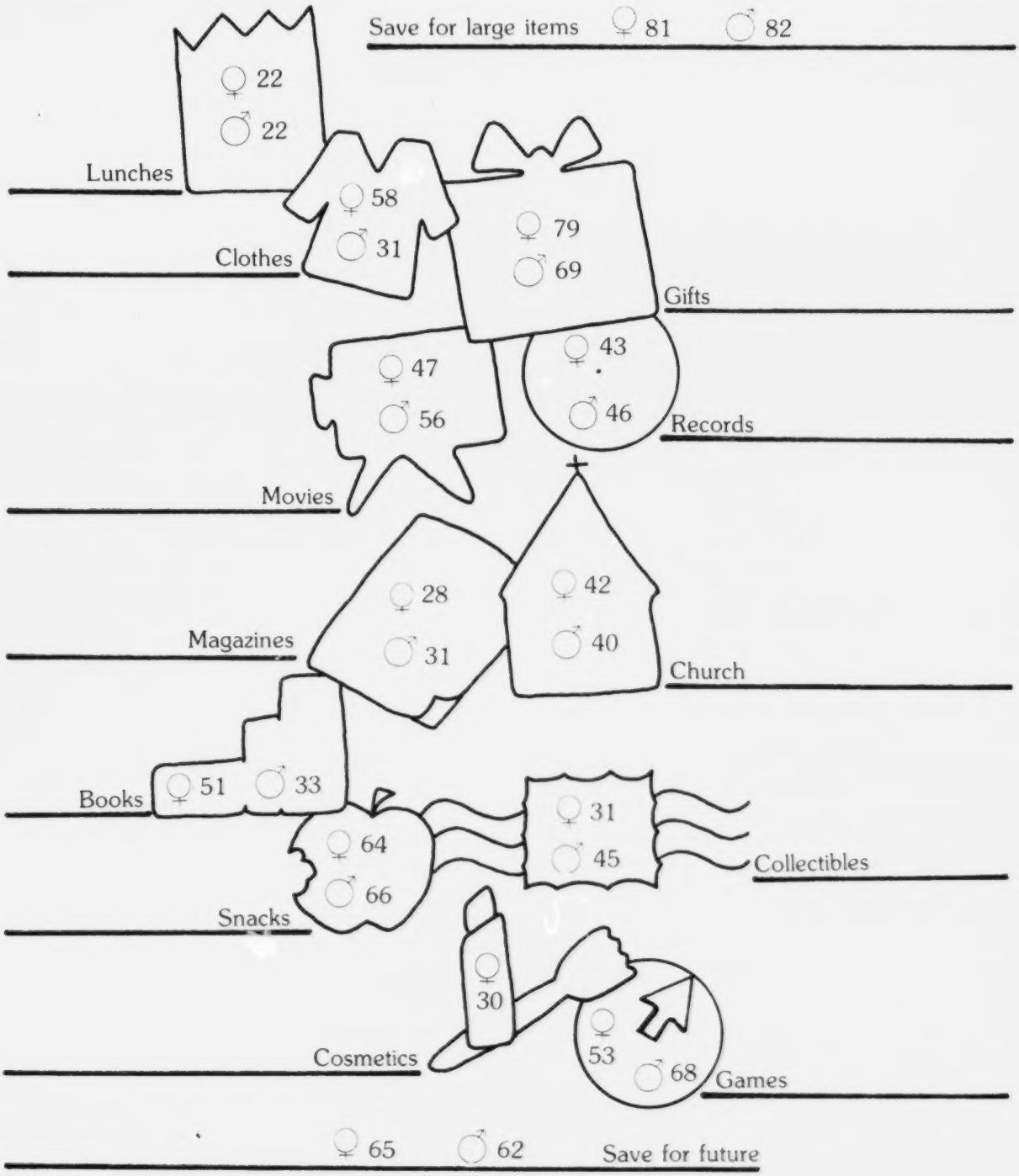


FIGURE 9.

How youths spend their money.*



*Numbers indicate percentages.

Career Exploration

Career exploration is directly related to Hill's developmental task of achievement. The increased ability of early adolescents to think abstractly and the increasing amount of interaction with the outside world leads them to the first serious consideration of what they would like to do in their futures. One of these considerations is what kind of work they would like to do as an adult. Although this consideration is exploratory, and should be, early adolescents often are making decisions that open or close future options related to careers. These decisions impact upon which classes they choose to take, activities in which they choose to become active, and their attitudes toward different jobs.

WHO IS TALKING ABOUT CAREERS?

Early adolescents were asked a number of questions related to careers. Ninety percent said that they had thought about what kind of job they would have in the future. Eighty percent said that they had talked to others about these jobs.

Parents were asked three questions about career exploration within the past year: (1) Had they talked with their spouse or another adult about the early adolescent's career? (2) Had they discussed careers with their early adolescent? (3) Had they discussed the steps necessary in career preparation with their early adolescent?

Over one-fourth of the parents said that they had not talked to their spouse or another adult about their child and a career. One-third of the parents said that they had done this once or twice. Mothers were significantly more likely to say that they had talked to their spouse or another adult about their son's careers than their daughter's career** (see Fig. 10).

When asked if they had talked to their child about careers, one-third of the fathers and 11 percent of the mothers said that they had not done this at all. One-third of the fathers and 42 percent of the mothers said that they had talked with their child about a career once or twice (see Fig. 11). Twenty-two percent of the fathers and 12 percent of the mothers said that they had not talked about the steps involved in preparation for a career. About one-fourth of the fathers and 38 percent of the mothers said that they had talked once or twice (see Fig. 12). Fathers were significantly more likely to have talked about career preparation with their sons than they were with their daughters.**

JOB PREFERENCES OF EARLY ADOLESCENTS

Youths were also asked how they would like working in 22 different jobs. They could choose from the following answers: yes, very much; probably; maybe, possibly; and not at all. The jobs were selected from a wide variety of occupational types. Some were well known and others had to be explained to the early adolescents.

Boys preferred technical careers and outdoor careers (architect, chemist, wildlife specialist, forester, and space engineer). Girls preferred service careers (secretary, teacher, and child care worker). Although the degree of interest was significantly different between boys and girls, over 50 percent of both sexes wanted to be computer programmers. Over 50 percent of the boys and girls also said that they would like to be either doctors or lawyers (see Fig. 13).

FIGURE 10.

Number of times in past year parents have discussed child's career options with another adult.

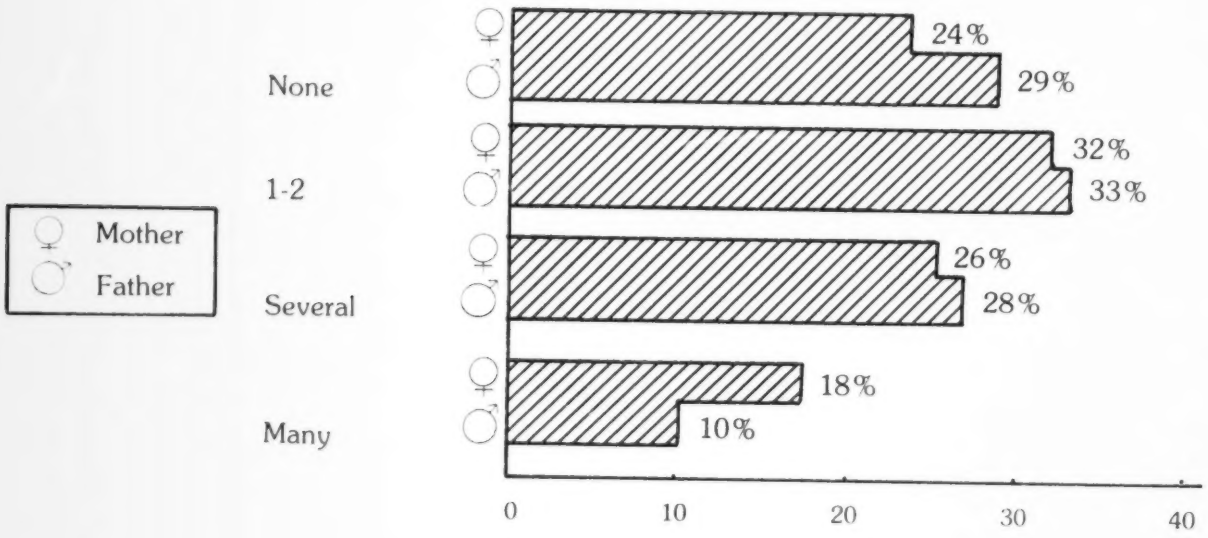


FIGURE 11.

Number of times in past year parent and child have discussed career options.

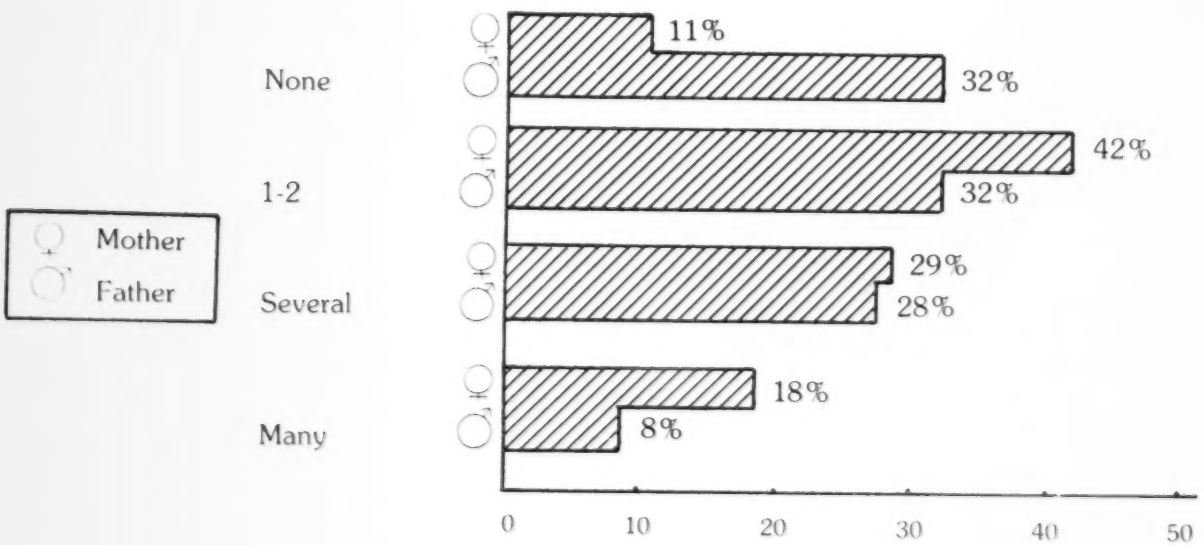


FIGURE 12.

Number of times in past year parent and child have discussed career steps.

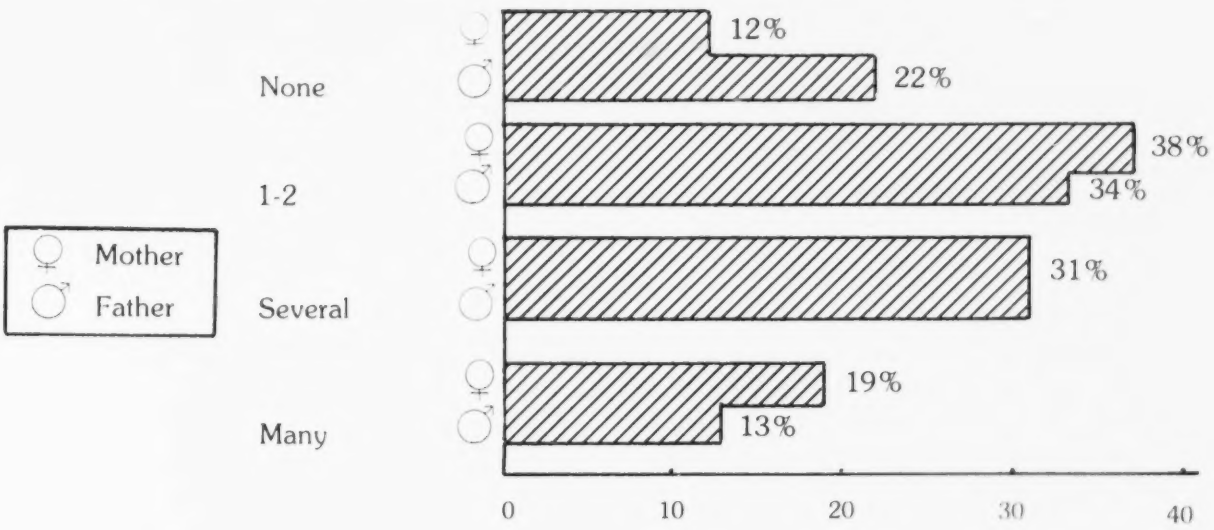
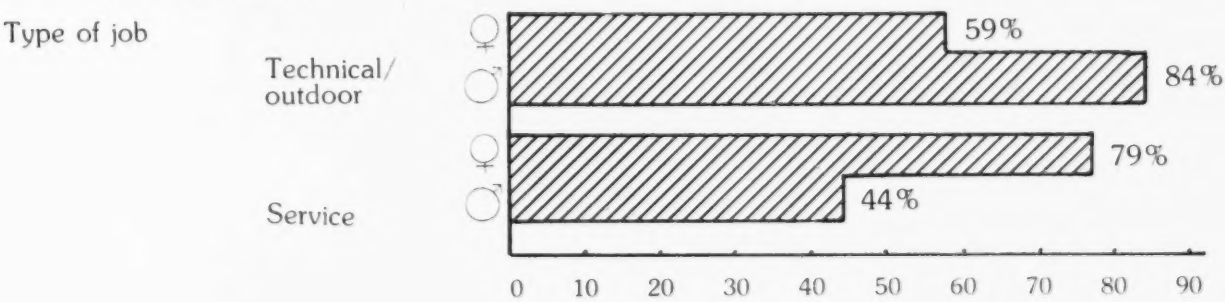


FIGURE 13.

Career preferences of early adolescents (average percentage reporting "very much" and "probably").



VARIABLES RELATED TO CAREER INTERESTS

Two other variables were examined to see if they had any influence on jobs in which early adolescents showed an interest. These were maternal employment and family income.

Daughters of employed mothers were less likely than girls whose mothers were not employed to be interested in being a baker,** wildlife specialist,* or librarian.* They were more likely to show interest in the jobs of bulldozer operator,* chemist,** and doctor.* While the first set of information is inconclusive, the second set implies that daughters of employed mothers may be less traditional in their career preferences. Sons of employed mothers were less likely to indicate an interest in being a baker,* chemist,** computer specialist,* dietitian,** factory worker,* wildlife specialist,* gas station attendant,*** or secretary,** or in working with handicappers** than were sons of mothers who were not employed. There does not seem to be a pattern here to explain the effects of maternal employment on sons' career preferences.

There were no differences between career preferences when family income was examined.

Sex Role Attitudes: Masculine and Feminine Qualities

Attitudes toward what is appropriate behavior for men and women are defined by the society and the times in which those men and women live. These attitudes are also part of the developmental task of identity and are related to the task of sexuality.

The large increase in the number of employed women in the last 30 years, the women's movement which accelerated in the late 60's and early 70's, and women's increasing control over their fertility have lead to changes in what is considered appropriate behavior for men and women. What do early adolescents, who began their lives in the middle of this period, believe are important qualities for men and women to have? Which qualities are important to their parents?

Early adolescents were asked to rate the importance of 12 qualities for men and women. They could choose one of the following answers: very important, important, not very important, or not important at all. Parents were asked how important it was that their child develop these same 12 qualities. The parent reports were examined for differences between parents of girls and parents of boys.

SEX ROLE ATTITUDES OF EARLY ADOLESCENTS

Overall, early adolescents and their parents reported that the same qualities were important for women and men. Over 80 percent of the youths and their parents reported that it was important or very important that men and women be gentle, neat in their habits, educated, ambitious, able to express their feelings, independent, interested in their looks, self-confident, and a good decision-maker. Other findings included:

- Between 45 and 79 percent of the early adolescents and their parents reported that it was important or very important for men and women to make a lot of money and to always act as a leader.

- Between 15 and 35 percent of the early adolescents and their parents reported that it was important for men and women to never cry.

IMPORTANT QUALITIES FOR WOMEN

- Mothers were more likely than early adolescents to report that making a lot of money was an important quality.*

- Boys were more likely than girls to report that it is important for women to never cry and to be leaders.***

- Girls were more likely than boys to report that it is important for women to express their feelings.*

IMPORTANT QUALITIES FOR MEN

- Mothers were more likely than early adolescents to report that expressing feelings was an important quality.*

-Boys were more likely than girls to report that it is important or very important that men express their feelings and be leaders.***

OTHER VARIABLES RELATED TO SEX ROLE ATTITUDES

When mothers are employed, they are more likely to be nontraditional in their sex role attitudes. Because of this, the statements used to look at sex role attitudes were examined to see if maternal employment made a difference in the attitude of the early adolescent. Two differences were found. Both sons* and daughters** of employed mothers were less likely to say that it is important that women never cry than were those children of women who were not employed. Boys were less likely to think it important for men to be ambitious if their mothers were employed. If these findings are examined for their relationship to traditional sex role attitudes, they are inconsistent.

When family income was examined to see if it influenced early adolescent sex role attitudes, more differences were found for girls than for boys. As family income increased, boys were less likely to say that it was important that women not cry. For girls, an increase in family income meant that they were more likely to say that women should be ambitious, independent, and self-confident.* They were also more likely to say that it is important that men be educated.

ATTITUDES AND THEIR RELATIONSHIP TO BEHAVIORS

Although early adolescents reported nonstereotypic attitudes toward masculine and feminine qualities, they reported more stereotypic behaviors. In an examination of reported activities and careers interests, early adolescents consistently reported that their behaviors are what would traditionally be considered masculine and feminine:

-Boys were significantly more likely to report an interest in the following activities: archery, canoeing, fishing, rockets, model cars, leather, electronics, engine repair,*** survival,** and snowmobiling.*

-Girls were significantly more likely to report an interest in cake decorating, cooking, crafts, needlework, knitting, sewing, growing indoor plants, dancing, drama,*** and gardening.*

-Boys were significantly more likely to report the following jobs as ones which they might like to do: architect, bulldozer operator, chemist, computer specialist, factory worker, farmer, forester, gas station attendant, miner, space engineer, and wildlife specialist.***

-Girls were significantly more likely to report the following jobs as ones in which they might be interested: childcare worker, librarian, nurse, counselor, secretary, teacher,*** and dietitian.*

Stress and Coping

Early adolescence is sometimes thought of as a very stressful time for the early adolescent and those around him or her. There is growing debate over whether this stage of development is really any more stressful than any other. In any case, early adolescents do experience stress, and how they cope with this stress is related to the developmental task of identity.

When people are frightened, irritated, confused, endangered or excited, their bodies react physically and emotionally. This reaction is called stress. Although stress is often thought of as nervous tension, any demand--physical or emotional--results in stress. Change is a major demand in the life of the early adolescent. This change may be pleasant or unpleasant, but the fact that it exists creates a demand on the early adolescent that results in stress.

In order to examine the changes that early adolescents were experiencing, a list of 25 events were read to the youths. The youths responded if this event had occurred to them or if it had not. They then reported whether the stressor that had occurred affected them a little, a lot, or not at all. Parents were also asked to respond to this list and mark those events which the early adolescent had experienced. Coping strategies were also examined.

PHYSICAL CHANGES

Sixty-three percent of the early adolescents said that they had grown 3 to 6 inches in the past year. Parents' reports agreed with this youth observation. Almost 50 percent of early adolescents reported noticing body changes. Thirty-eight percent of girls had begun menstruation in the past year, and 33 percent of the boys had experienced voice changes (see Fig. 14).

One-fourth of the girls reported that menstruation affected them "a lot," while one-eighth of the boys reported voice changes affecting them to this degree.

When asked about body changes, youths were significantly more likely to have noticed changes in themselves than were their fathers or mothers.***

CHANGES WITHIN THE FAMILY

None of the family changes listed were experienced by at least half of the group interviewed. One-fourth to one-half of the youths had experienced the death of a family member, a family illness, and the mother's entry or re-entry into the work force. Over half of these youths reported that the death of a family member had affected them a lot. Almost as many reported that a family illness had had this effect. Less than 10 percent of the youths reported that the mother's return to work had affected them "a lot" (see Fig. 15).

Three to 24 percent of the youths reported the following changes: parents separated, parent lost job, birth of a sibling, older sibling leaving, trouble with relatives, and unfair punishment. Over half of these reported that the unfair punishment had affected them "a lot." One-fourth to one-third reported that the other changes had affected them "a lot."

In general, more early adolescents reported that they had experienced these changes than did their parents.

CHANGES OUTSIDE THE FAMILY

Over one-half of the youths had experienced the death of a pet in the past year. Over half reported that the death had affected them "a lot."

Twenty-five to 50 percent of the youths had experienced trouble with a teacher or a change in schools in the past year. Boys were significantly more likely to report trouble with a teacher than were girls. Over half of the boys reported that this trouble affected them "a little." Almost one-third of the youths reported that changing schools affected them "a lot." See Figure 16.

Less than 25 percent of the early adolescents reported the following changes: friend moved, being a victim of violence, being a victim of theft, moving, experimenting with drugs or alcohol, upset by gym showers, and beginning to date. Boys were significantly more likely to report that they had begun dating than were girls. Being the victim of theft was the change in this set which affected boys the most. A friend moving was the change in this set which had the most affect on girls.

HOW YOUTHS REACT TO STRESS

Listening to music and being alone were the two reactions to stress that were reported by over 50 percent of the early adolescents. Girls were more likely than boys to report listening to music.

Those activities that one-quarter to one-half of the early adolescents reported as reactions to stress were: talking with a friend, doing physical activities, eating, talking with parents, praying, sleeping, avoiding the problem, writing, yelling, ignoring the problem, getting quiet, keeping busy, playing with their pet, keeping feelings to themselves, daydreaming, doing a relaxing activity, and talking on the phone. Girls were significantly more likely to say that they talked with a friend;** wrote letters, poems, or in diaries;*** cried;*** and talked on the phone.*** Boys were significantly more likely to say that they did physical activities** and kept their feelings to themselves.**

FIGURE 14.

Physical changes of early adolescents over past year.

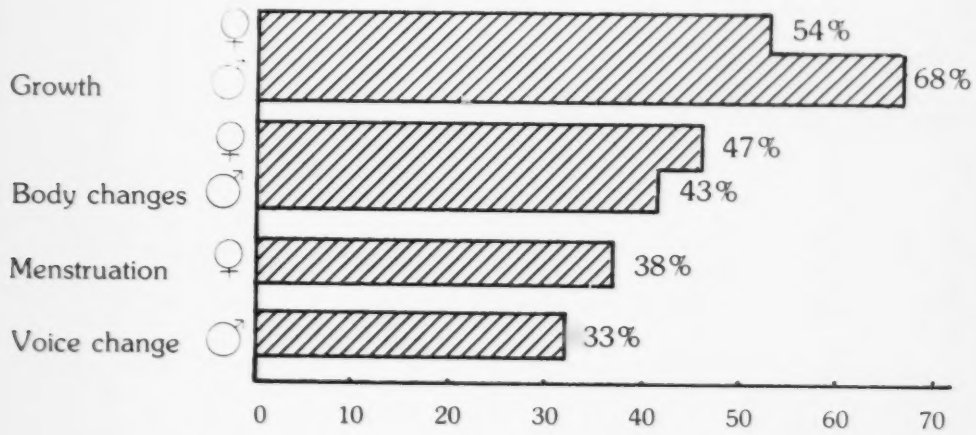


FIGURE 15.

Family changes experienced by early adolescents during past year.

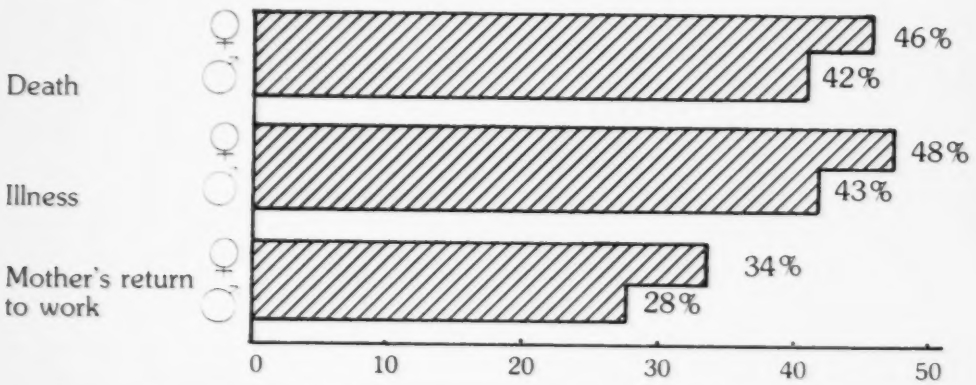
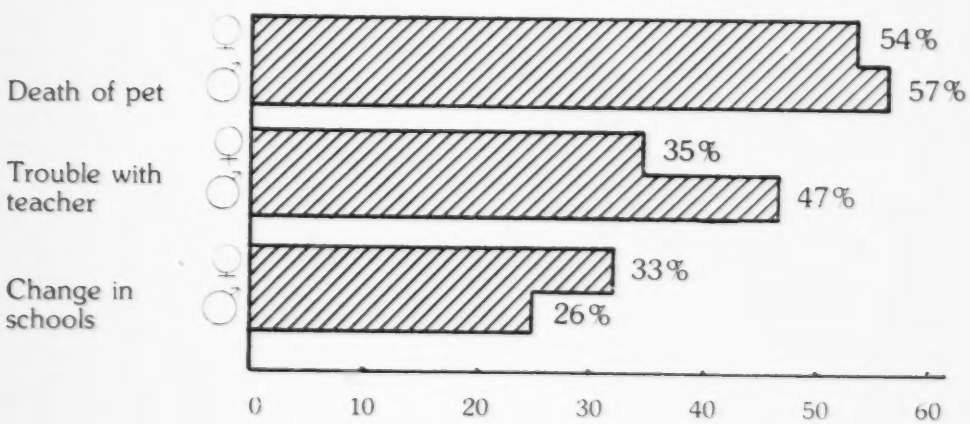


FIGURE 16.

Changes outside the family experienced by early adolescents during past year.



THE EARLY ADOLESCENT IN THE FAMILY

The family serves as an important environment in and through which the developmental tasks of early adolescence are learned. For those tasks that demand environments other than the family, the family plays a large part in when, where, and how the early adolescent enters those environments. For example, in order for early adolescents to become autonomous, they need to begin taking more responsibilities in the family and outside of the family. How those responsibilities are chosen for and by the early adolescent and how much supervision the early adolescent is given are important to how the youth develops into a responsible, self-managing person.

The following sections report on the information found in the Michigan Early Adolescent Survey. Each section discusses a different topic related to early adolescents and their families.

HIGHLIGHTS: EARLY ADOLESCENT IN THE FAMILY

FAMILY COMMUNICATION

The people to whom youths talk depends on the topic:

Girls are more likely to talk to their mothers about friends and their bodies.

One-third of the youths said that they would talk to neither parent about friends or body changes.

The degree of communication that parents reported as taking place was greater than what the youths reported.

FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS

94 percent of the youths said that they felt close or very close to their mothers; 86 percent said the same about their fathers.

Two-thirds of the youths said that they felt close or very close to their siblings.

Fathers reported significantly higher home-family self-esteem on four of six items than did mothers.

FAMILY TIME AND ACTIVITIES

58 percent of the mothers said that they spent about the right amount of time with their child; 45 percent of fathers said the same.

The youths were more likely to report that they were doing daily activities with their parents than were the parents.

PARENTAL EXPECTATIONS FOR EARLY ADOLESCENCE

A slight majority of parents did not believe that early adolescence is the stereotypically difficult time that is often portrayed.

Parents were more likely to have positive attitudes toward their own youth than toward youths in general.

Parents who held negative attitudes toward teens in general felt the same way about their own teen.

SKILL DEVELOPMENT

Over 50 percent of the parents said they would like help in teaching their child to use computers, work with the elderly, learn about other cultures, and learn leadership and communication skills.

Different family types indicated different needs.

Family Communication

Communication is vital to every person and family. It is through communication that socialization occurs. It is through communication that family values are taught and maintained. In essence, it is through communication that the family functions. The importance of communication relates it to all of the developmental tasks defined by Hill (1980).

The stereotypic thinking about early adolescence is that it is a time when there is a "gap" between the early adolescent and his/her parents. Is this true? Is it true for both parents regardless of whether their child is a girl or boy? Are there some topics that early adolescents are more likely to talk about with their parents than others?

In order to answer these questions, early adolescents were asked if they found it easier to talk to their mothers, fathers, both parents, or neither about a set of topics. These topics were: school, money, friends, changes in their bodies, something they had done wrong, permission to go somewhere, something they were upset about, and unfair rules at home.

TO WHOM DO EARLY ADOLESCENTS TALK?

Figure 17 provides the percentages of girls and boys who said that they would talk to one or the other parent, neither of them, or both of them about the topics listed above. The person to whom the youths said they talked seemed to be related to gender and the topic.

Girls, as can be seen, are much more likely to talk to their mothers only about friends and body changes than are boys. Boys are more likely to talk to their mothers about unfair rules at home.

When the category "talk to father only" is examined, few major differences were found. Body changes is the exception to this. Over one-fourth of the boys said that they would talk to their father only about body changes. None of the girls said that they would discuss this topic with their fathers only.

More boys than girls said that they would talk to both of their parents about their friends and body changes. Girls were more likely to talk to both of their parents about unfair family rules.

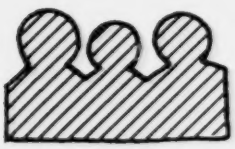
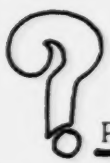
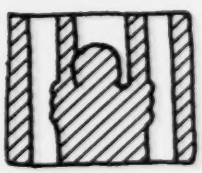
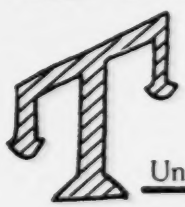
When the response "neither parent" is examined, some disturbing results are found. A surprising one-third of boys and girls said that they would talk to neither parent about their friends. Almost this same percentage of boys said that they would talk to neither parent about body changes. Almost one-fifth of early adolescents would talk to neither parent if they were upset about something. These findings indicate that there is a group of early adolescents who are not talking to their parents about some of the most important changes taking place in their lives.

PARENTAL RESPONSES

Both parents were asked which parent their child talked to about the same set of topics. Parents indicated that they believe that more communication is

FIGURE 17.

People with whom early adolescents talk.*

		Mothers only	Fathers only	Both	Neither
School work	♀	40	9	46	5
	♂	43	10	41	7
Money	♀	29	16	46	9
	♂	25	20	42	13
 Friends	♀	47	2	18	32
	♂	23	7	37	33
Body changes	♀	80	0	5	15
	♂	15	26	27	32
 Permission	♀	38	12	49	2
	♂	42	16	41	1
 Wrong doings	♀	42	5	33	20
	♂	41	9	28	23
Upset	♀	48	4	28	20
	♂	44	7	33	16
 Unfair rules	♀	21	13	53	13
	♂	33	13	43	10

*Numbers indicate percentages.

taking place than early adolescents did. On most topics, mothers and fathers were slightly more likely to say that their child talked to them (only) than was the child. However, there were differences. On the topic "when the child is upset," twice as many mothers said that their child talked only to them than was reported by the early adolescents. Fathers were more likely to report that the child talked to both parents than was reported by the early adolescents.

SIBLINGS

In a related section, early adolescents were asked if they would talk to their siblings if they were upset about something. A large majority said that they would not. Eighteen percent of the boys replied that they would, and 29 percent of the girls said that they would. Siblings do not seem to be a source of support for most youths when they are upset (see Fig. 18).

COMMUNICATION OUTSIDE OF THE FAMILY

Youths were asked to whom they would talk if they had a problem. Boys answered "yes" to the following: relative (15%), teacher (11%), and counselor (12%). Girls' responses were similar: relative (19%), teacher (11%), and counselor (13%). For most youths, adults outside of the family were not a major source of support when the youths were upset (see Fig. 19).

FIGURE 18.

Percent of early adolescents who talk to siblings when upset.

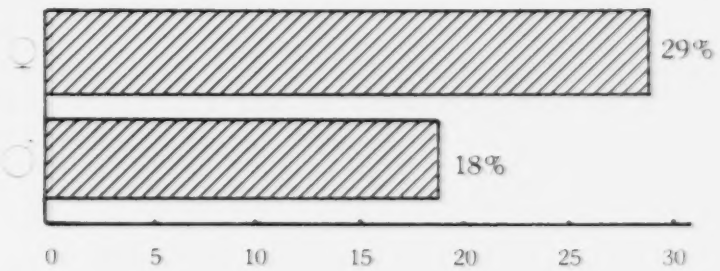
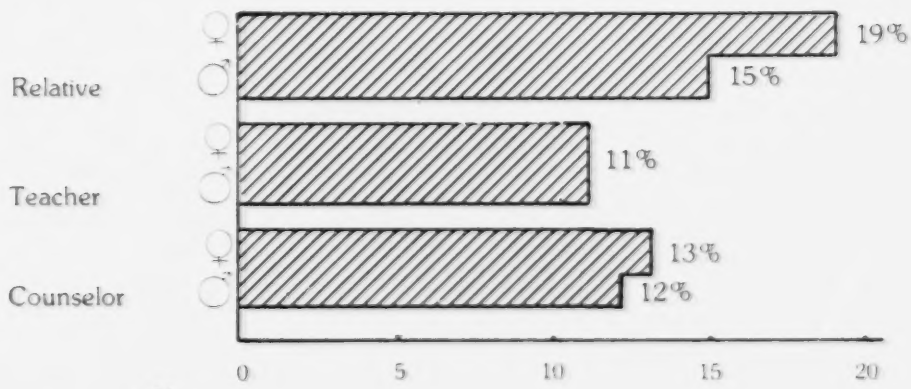


FIGURE 19.

Percent of early adolescents who talk to people outside of family when upset.



Family Relationships

Family relationships can be important to all of the developmental tasks of early adolescence. When early adolescents have a positive relationship with their parents, they are more likely to develop into healthy, growing people.

Three aspects of family relationships were examined so that the relationships between early adolescents and their families could be assessed: closeness of relationships in the family, family self-esteem, and overall ratings of the early adolescent and the family in the past year.

CLOSENESS

Figures 20 and 21 show responses of early adolescents and their parents to a question that asked them how close they felt to various family members. They were asked if they felt very close, close, not close, or not close at all to each other.

Ninety-four percent of the early adolescents reported feeling close or very close to their mothers. Eighty-six percent reported this level of closeness to their fathers. Ninety-one percent of the mothers said that they felt close or very close to their sons; 96 percent reported this level of closeness to their daughters. Eighty-three percent of the fathers said that they felt close or very close to their sons; 87 percent reported this level of closeness to their daughters. Mothers reported a significantly higher level of closeness to their daughters than to their sons. No differences were found for fathers.

Two-thirds of the early adolescents reported being close or very close to their brothers and sisters. In both girls and boys, these feelings of closeness seemed to increase after age 10. In boys, this was indicated by a 10 percent increase in the number of boys between ages 10 and 11 who said that they felt very close to their siblings. The percentage stayed the same after this (28%). The percentage of girls (34%) who said that they did not feel close to their siblings dropped to 15 percent after age 10 and stayed at that level.

PARENTAL HOME-FAMILY SELF-ESTEEM

Parents responded to the same set of statements from the Coopersmith family subscale as did the early adolescents. As reported earlier, 72 percent of the early adolescents reported that they felt good about their families. Girls were less likely to feel that their family pushed them than were boys.

Seventy-eight percent of the fathers and 67 percent of the mothers said that they felt good about their families (see Fig. 22). Fathers responded more positively to the following items:

-My family considers my feelings.**
-My family understands me.*

FIGURE 20.

Level of closeness to parents as indicated by early adolescents.

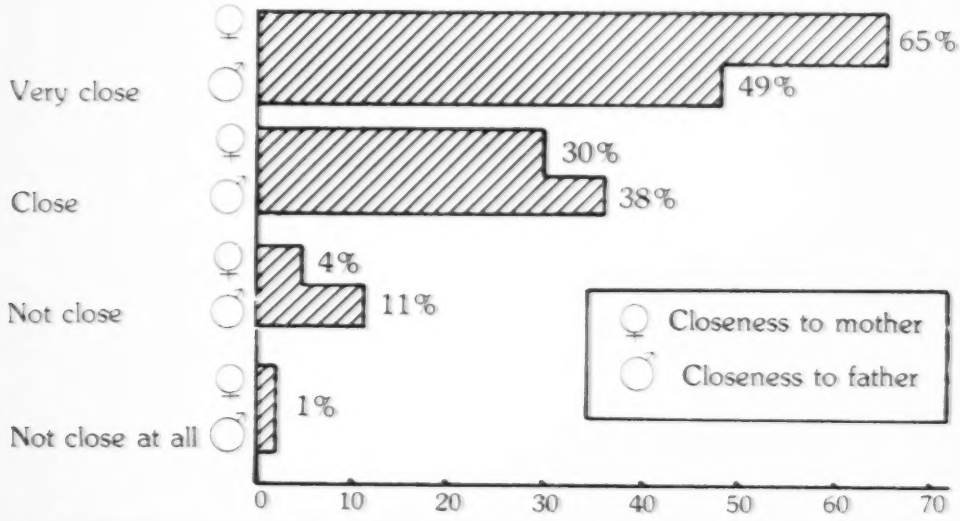


FIGURE 21.

Level of closeness to early adolescents as indicated by parents.

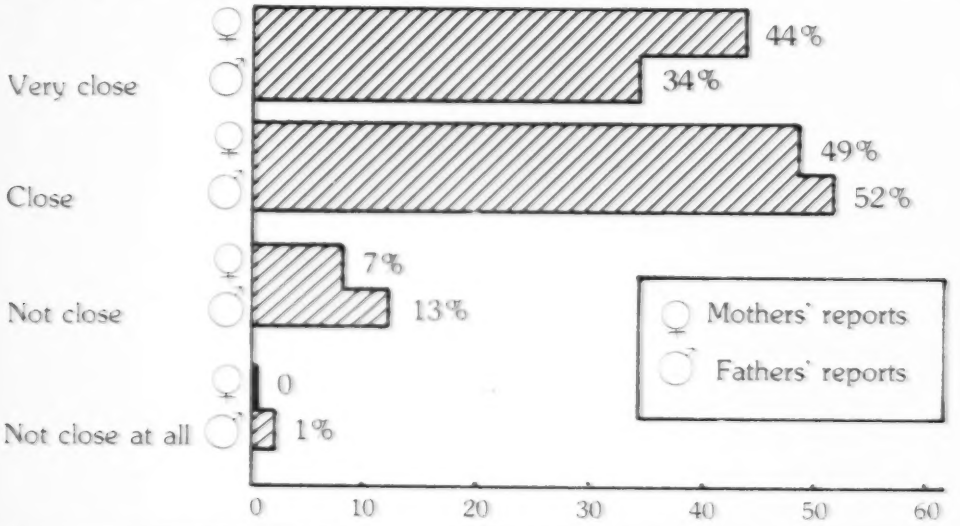
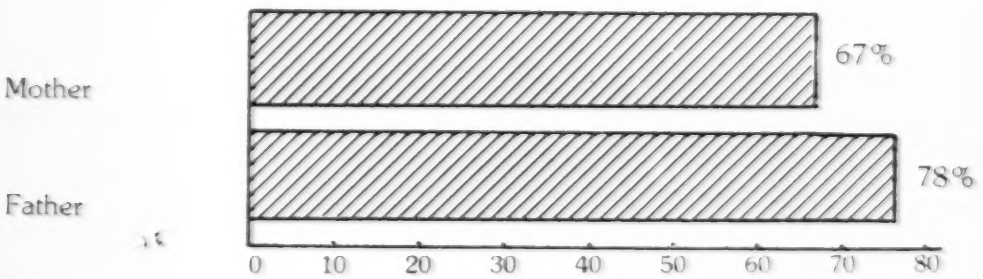


FIGURE 22.

Parents' levels of self-esteem related to home-family.



They responded more negatively to:

-At times I feel as if my family is pushing me.*
-At times I would like to leave home.***

CHILD AND FAMILY IN PAST YEAR

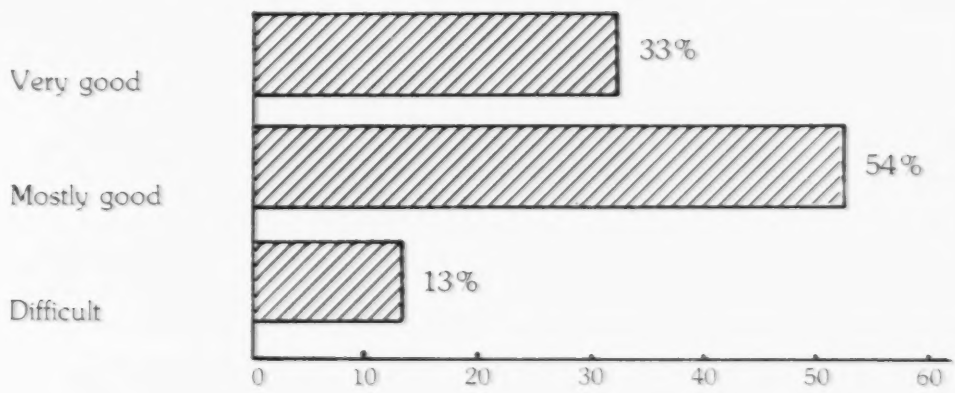
When parents were asked how their family had been doing in the past year, most indicated that it had been a good year. There were no differences between mothers and fathers. One-fifth reported that it had been a very good year; almost two-thirds reported that it had been mostly good. Almost 15 percent reported that their past year had been somewhat difficult. Four percent reported a very difficult year.

When parents were asked how their child had been doing in the past year, almost one-third stated that their child had had a very good year. Slightly over 50 percent reported that their child had had a mostly good year. Thirteen percent reported that the past year had been very difficult for their child. See Figure 23.

Parents were asked if they enjoyed parenting their child more now than in the past. Fathers were more likely to say "yes" than were mothers. This was more true if they had sons (63%) than if they had daughters (57%). Almost 50 percent of mothers answered that they enjoyed parenting their child more now. Their answers were the same whether they had a son or a daughter. The age of the child did not seem to make any consistent difference to the parents.

FIGURE 23.

How parents rated their child's past year.



Family Time and Activities

The developmental tasks of attachment, achievement, and identity require that early adolescents move out into the world and spend less time with their families than they did when they were younger. This does not mean that family time is unimportant. In fact, the opposite may be true. If youths are spending less time with their families, it may mean that this shorter amount of time spent is more important. When this is considered in the social context of more employed mothers, more single parents, and less human labor needed in the home, it becomes important to look at how families do spend the time that they have and how they feel about it.

In order to look at these pieces of family life, the parents were asked about the amount of time that they spent with their children and about the use of leisure time (such as movies and sports). Both parents and children responded to a list of activities that showed the kinds of daily activities in which parents participate with youths. Some of the activities about which they were asked were how often they ate meals, did homework, watched TV, went to the library, played games, did crafts, and prepared or cleaned up after meals together.

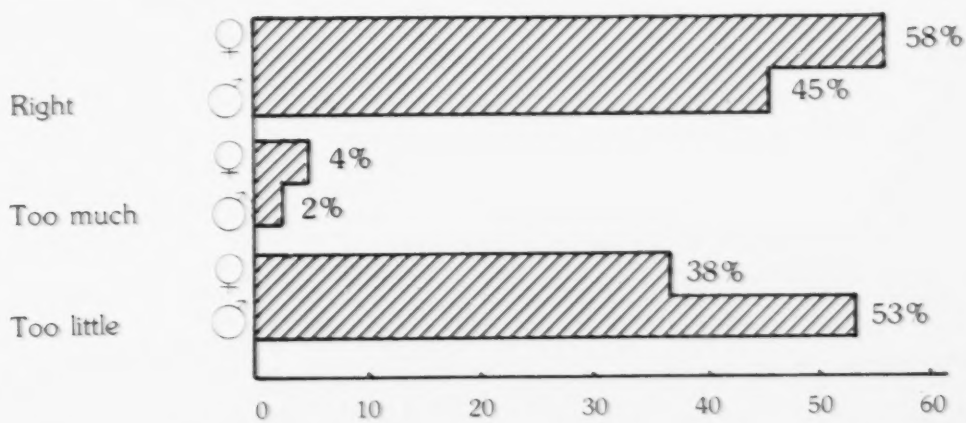
FAMILY TIME

Mothers (58%) were more likely to say that they spent about the right amount of time with their early adolescents than were fathers (45%). Mothers were also a little more likely to say that they spend too much time with their child (4%) than were fathers (2%) (see Fig. 24).

When the youths were asked if they had enough time to do what they liked to do, half said that they had a lot of time to do with as they pleased and almost that many said that they had some time to do with as they wanted.

FIGURE 24.

Parents' ratings of the amount of time they spend with their early adolescent.



FAMILY ACTIVITIES

The findings on family activities are reported in Figure 25.

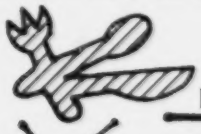
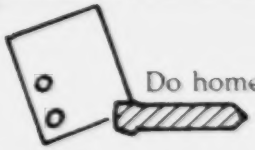
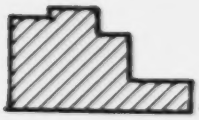
In general, early adolescents were more likely to report that they were doing daily activities with their parents than were the parents. About 50 percent of the youths said that they ate dinner with their parents every day. Forty percent of parents reported doing so. Twenty-seven percent of the early adolescents said that they did homework with parents each day while only 4 percent of the parents said the same. Almost 90 percent of the youths reported watching television with their parents every day. Only 29 percent of the parents reported this.

Church (35%), games (27%), and sports activities (24%) were the most likely ways that parents and children spent time together. Craft activities, family meetings, and outings to the library or movies happened less frequently. Mothers were more likely to go to movies with their children than were fathers. Mothers of girls were less likely to report attending sports events with sons and more likely to report attending them with their daughters.

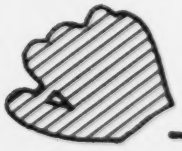
FIGURE 25.

Frequency of participation in family activities.*

Children's responses:

	Most/everyday	Once/twice week	Monthly	Rarely/never
 Eat meals	84	10	3	3
Watch TV	89	6	1	4
 Do homework	27	32	19	22
 Go to library	3	10	27	59
Participate in games	8	27	32	31
Do crafts	7	15	20	58
Go to church	20	35	15	23

Parents' responses:

Go to movies	1	1	15	83
Attend family meetings	6	14	29	51
 Attend sports events	6	24	23	47

*Numbers indicate percentages.

Parental Expectations for Early Adolescence

Many adults in this culture view early adolescence as a time of "storm and stress." This is probably the result of the psychoanalytic view of adolescence as a time in which rebellion is necessary so that early adolescents can begin to achieve the developmental tasks of autonomy and attachment. In any case, if a few adults are asked what teenagers are like, they are likely to say that they are sassy, rebellious, and not very pleasant to be with! If these adults are parents of early adolescents, these attitudes may influence how the parent interacts with the child, and the attitudes may have negative effects on the parent-early adolescent relationship.

In order to see if parents of early adolescents thought of the teen years as particularly difficult, parents were asked to what extent they agreed with 10 statements that are common stereotypes of this stage in life. An example is: Most teenagers are lazy. These answers were combined to form a total. In another part of the questionnaire, parents were asked if similar statements were like their child or unlike their child. These answers, too, were combined to make a total.

PARENTS' RESPONSES

There were three major findings from the parents answers:

1. A slight majority of the parents did not believe that teenagers in general were all the horrible things that are sometimes said and thought about youths at this age.

2. Parents were more likely to have more positive attitudes toward their own child than toward teens in general.

3. Parents who had negative attitudes about teens in general held these same attitudes about their own child.

It is not clear from this analysis whether parents' attitudes affect early adolescent behavior or if early adolescent behaviors affect parents' attitudes. It seems likely that both serve to increase the stereotype about teens in general and the parents' own child. These findings point out the important influence that parental attitudes may have on children. If these parental attitudes do influence how parents interact with their early adolescents, it is important that the attitudes be shaped in ways that help the early adolescent grow and that do not hinder growth.

Early Adolescent Skill Development: Parental Needs for Help Outside the Home

During early adolescence, youths begin to develop those skills which are related to the developmental task of achievement in many areas: play, work, and study. Many life skills are taught in informal settings such as the family or community groups. To what extent do parents perceive that certain life skills are needed? To what extent do they feel that they need help so that their early adolescent can develop these skills?

Parents were given a list of 20 life skills and asked if each skill was important and whether early adolescents could learn it within the family or whether outside help was needed. The skills can be put into five groups: technical, mechanical, interpersonal, personal, and household.

IMPORTANCE OF SKILLS

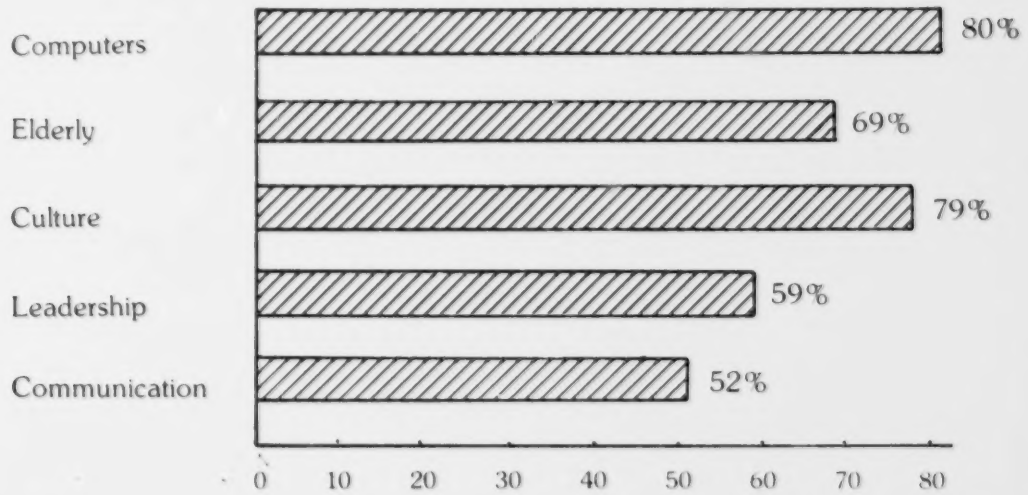
Over 90 percent of the parents indicated that the following skills were important: computer programming, caring for children, cooking, sewing, housekeeping, understanding other cultures, decision-making, managing time, developing self-confidence, communicating, and knowing about sexuality. Parents were more likely to say that learning to care for young children was more important for their daughters than for their sons.

WHERE HELP IS NEEDED

Mothers and fathers were in agreement about which skills were the ones with which they would need help from outside of the home if their early adolescents were to learn these skills. There were five skills with which over 50 percent of the parents said they would need help: computers (80%), working with the elderly (69%), learning about other cultures (79%), leadership (59%), and communication (52%) (see Fig. 26).

FIGURE 26.

Skill areas in which parents would like help for their early adolescent.



Of these skills, only leadership opportunities were addressed by the early adolescent interview. In this area, responses showed that 58 percent of the boys and 49 percent of the girls had given a speech; 10 percent of the boys and 21 percent of the girls had held an office in a club or at school; 75-percent of the boys and 59 percent of the girls had been on a team; and 20 percent of the boys and 16 percent of the girls had organized a play or club at some time. These findings indicate that more opportunities need to be provided to youths so that they can develop the skill of leadership.

DIFFERENCES BY FAMILY TYPES

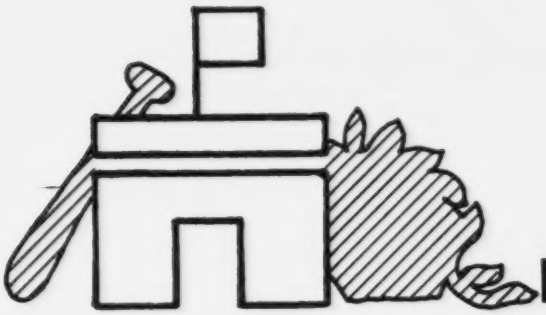
Different needs were reported by different family types. Family types were defined as single mother, dual earner, and traditional. Statistical differences occurred between family types on 7 of the 20 skill areas. Those skill areas are: home repairs,*** decision-making,*** caring for children,* raising food,* information about sexuality,* self-confidence,* and mechanics.*** At least 50 percent of parents in all three family types said that they needed help with the following skills: mechanics, computers, working with the elderly, leadership, and communication. In addition, at least 50 percent of single mothers said that they needed help teaching home repairs and self-confidence. Learning about other cultures, caring for children, self-confidence, getting along, and managing time were reported as those areas with which 50 percent or more of dual earner families would like help. Traditional families listed learning about cultures as well as the common five on their list of skills with which help was needed.

EARLY ADOLESCENT ACTIVITIES OUTSIDE OF SCHOOL

The time that early adolescents spend outside of school is more than simply for leisure or play. It can be related to all of the developmental tasks examined in the Michigan Early Adolescent Survey. The development of attachment is encouraged during the time that children interact with their friends after school, whether in structured clubs or classes or in "hanging around." The opportunity to be with friends in different settings exposes the early adolescent to the world and helps him/her shape his/her identity as well as become more autonomous. Simply being part of an outside experience puts the early adolescent "on his/her own two feet" and allows him/her the opportunity to take responsibility for him/herself.

Achievement, too, is promoted by outside-of-school activities. Studies have shown that how children use their time outside of school is important to how they do when they are in school. Outside activities also can teach youths skills that are necessary in daily living as well as those necessary for vocational preparation.

The Michigan Early Adolescent Survey looked at four outside activities: television, after-school care, club involvement, and leisure activities.



HIGHLIGHTS: ACTIVITIES OUTSIDE OF SCHOOL

AFTER-SCHOOL CARE

81 percent of the youths said they go home after school on most days.

18 percent of the youths reported that they stay at school, and 5 percent said they go into town after school.

YOUTH GROUPS

Most early adolescents belong to a sports team, church group, or other kind of youth group.

75 percent of the youths joined the group because of its interesting and fun activities.

The youths reported learning skills and knowledge (70%), responsibility (33%), and meeting new friends (33%) in their youth groups.

Parents reported that their child gained social skills, subject knowledge and skills, personal skills, and self-esteem from being part of a youth group.

ACTIVITIES AND CLASSES

The most popular activities were outdoor activities.

Girls reported that they enjoyed or would like to learn traditionally feminine activities; boys said that they enjoyed or would like to learn traditionally masculine activities.

In general, the youths indicated they would like to learn new activities in a group setting.

TELEVISION

90 percent of the youths said that they watched TV every day.

Situation comedies and adventure shows were best liked.

Significantly more girls than boys watched "soap operas."

Almost half of the youths reported that there were some shows that they were not allowed to watch.

After-School Care

With the increase in the number of employed mothers, after-school care has been a topic of concern to many people. With the growing autonomy of early adolescents, many people feel that most youths can be left at home after school with no negative consequences. In fact, it could be argued that the one or two hours spent alone after school provide an excellent way to promote autonomy. Other people feel, however, that it is exactly because the early adolescent is at such a changing period of development that he/she needs to be cared for after school. These people would argue that autonomy is a process that needs supervision.

Early adolescents were asked a number of questions to show where they go after school and who takes care of them during the after-school hours.

WHO NEEDS AFTER-SCHOOL CARE?

Eighty-one percent of the youths said that they came home after school most of the time. Twelve percent stayed at school for clubs, sports, and classes. Seven percent said that they did something else.

WHO IS PROVIDING AFTER-SCHOOL CARE?

Of the youths who said that they went home, 86 percent said that someone else was there with them. This means that 14 percent of these youths were home alone. Seventy-three percent said that their mother was home when they got home. Twenty-five percent said that their father was there. Only 2 percent of the youths reported that a child care provider was waiting for them. Forty-one percent reported that an older sibling was at home after school; 22 percent said that a younger sibling was at home. It is difficult to tell from the data whether the 22 percent with younger siblings were under the care of the early adolescent or if a parent was also at home.

Of the 7 percent of youths who said that they went somewhere else after school, 69 percent said that they went into town. Eight percent were with child care providers, 4 percent were with neighbors, another 4 percent with relatives, and 15 percent had other arrangements.

Youth Groups

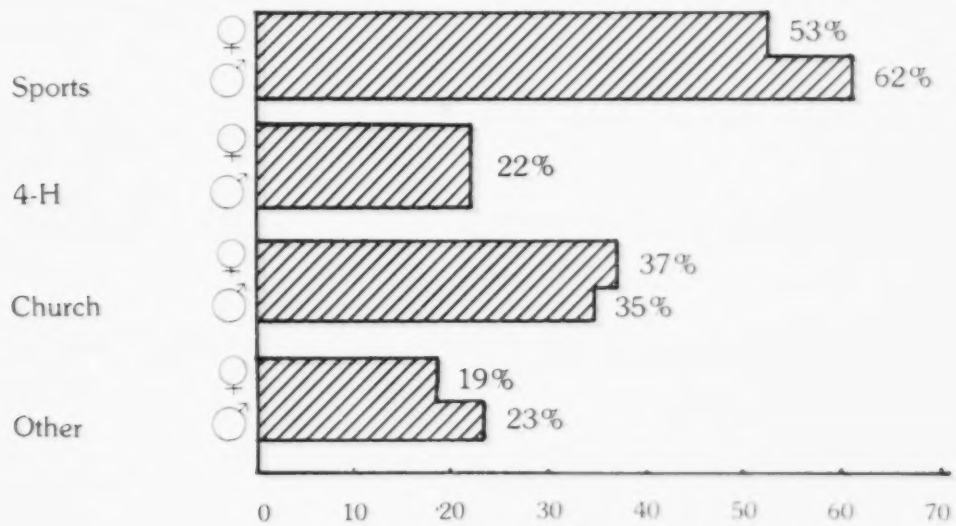
Youth groups and clubs can be an important force in the mastery of the developmental tasks of early adolescence. These groups provide an excellent place where youths can go out into the world and still be supervised to a greater or lesser extent by an adult. They often provide the peer group where attachment and identity development can be enhanced, where there is some kind of product or goal that promotes the task of achievement, and where the youths are expanding their world, which is part of autonomy.

WHO IS INVOLVED IN YOUTH GROUPS?

When asked about youth group participation, many early adolescents reported belonging to some kind of group. Fifty-three percent of the girls and 62 percent of the boys reported that they were on sports teams. Twenty-two percent said that they were in 4-H, 35 percent said that they were in church youth groups, and 18 percent reported belonging to some other kind of club (see Fig. 27).

FIGURE 27.

Groups to which early adolescents belong.



WHY YOUTHS JOIN GROUPS

Over 75 percent of the youths said that they had joined the group because it was fun or had interesting activities. Almost 40 percent said that they had joined to learn a specific skill or activity. One-third said that they had joined because a friend was in the group.

WHAT YOUTHS SAY ABOUT BEING IN YOUTH GROUPS

Seventy percent of the early adolescents said that they had gained a skill or knowledge because of their participation in a group. One third reported that they had met new friends as a result of belonging to a group. Another third said that they had learned responsibility from being in a group.

When asked what, if anything, they disliked about being in a youth group, the early adolescents answered: other members, uninteresting meetings, and losing.

Early adolescents described a good youth leader as being nice, caring, helpful, understanding, and knowledgeable about club activities.

WHAT PARENTS SAY ABOUT YOUTH GROUPS

When parents were asked what their child had gained from belonging to a youth group, they answered: social skills, subject matter knowledge and skills, personal skills, and self-esteem.

Outside-of-School Classes and Activities

Just as club participation can promote mastery of the developmental tasks of early adolescence, so can outside-of-school activities and classes. With the growing number of options available to early adolescents, it is important that the classes and activities offered are those in which youths are interested.

Early adolescents were given a list of activities. They were then asked if they liked to do each activity and if they were interested in learning the activity. If the youths said that they would like to learn the activity, they were then asked if they would like to learn the activity alone or in a group.

ACTIVITIES EARLY ADOLESCENTS LIKE TO DO

The most popular activities were outdoor activities. Over half of the boys and girls said that they liked to play softball, bicycle, camp, fish, swim, and jog. Boys were more likely to say that they enjoyed softball, canoeing, fishing, snowmobiling, and engaging in survival activities (see Fig. 28).

FIGURE 28.

Most popular outdoor activity preferences of youths.

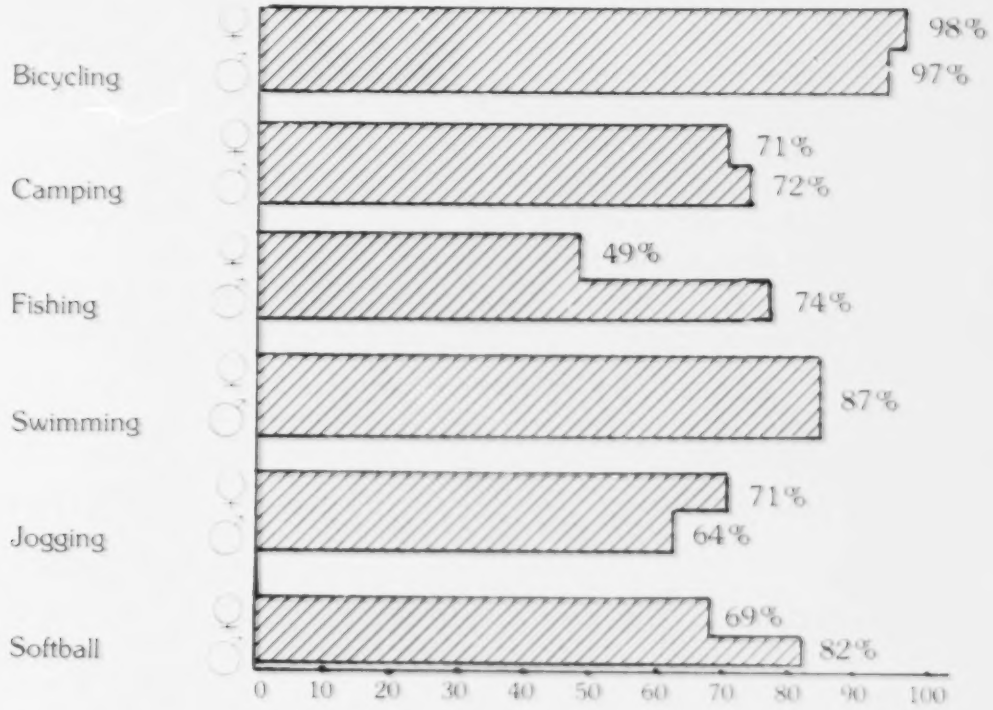


Figure 29 shows percentages of girls and boys who said that they liked to do or were interested in learning selected activities. Large differences were found between boys and girls on traditionally female activities. More girls than boys liked to cook, sew, knit, do crafts, decorate cakes, and do needlework. These differences also existed for the traditionally male activities. More boys than girls liked technical activities that included electronics, rocket-building, model-building, leathercraft, and engine repair. Computer programming was the exception to this trend. Over 50 percent of boys and girls liked computer programming.

Other findings related to activities are: (1) Over 70 percent of the early adolescents said that they liked to raise animals, and (2) More girls than boys liked the creative activities of dancing and drama.

ACTIVITIES YOUTHS WANT TO LEARN

Early adolescents showed an interest in learning many kinds of activities. Outdoor activities included archery, canoeing, snowmobiling, survival skills, and skiing. One-half of the youths said that they would like to learn computer programming or more about computer programming. In the technical area, boys said that they would like to learn electronics and engine repair. Thirty percent of the youths said that they would like to learn dancing and clowning.

HOW EARLY ADOLESCENTS PREFER TO LEARN ACTIVITIES

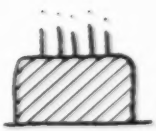
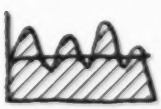
For the most part, the youths said that they would prefer to learn new activities as part of a group. There were a few differences between girls and boys. Over 50 percent of the early adolescents reported that they would like to learn the following activities in a group: archery, softball, canoeing, fishing, snowmobiling, swimming, bicycling, jogging (girls only), survival skills, woodworking, leathercraft, cake decorating (girls only), crafts, needleworking (boys only), model building (girls only), photography, gardening (boys only), horseback riding, computer programming, electronics, dancing, drama, and clowning.

Over 50 percent of the youths said that they would like to learn the following activities in a one-to-one situation: jogging (boys only), skiing, collecting, gardening (girls only), cake decorating (boys only), cooking, knitting, needlework (girls only), model building (boys only), growing plants indoors, raising animals, and drawing.

Girls were significantly more likely to say that they would like to learn snowmobiling, archery, and rocketry in a group. Boys were significantly more likely to say that they would like to learn knitting in a group.

FIGURE 29.

Activity preferences of boys and girls.*

	Cooking	♀ 77	♂ 37
	Sewing	♀ 45	♂ 5
	Knitting	♀ 30	♂ 5
	Crafts	♀ 68	♂ 60
	Cake decorating	♀ 40	♂ 16
	Needlework	♀ 36	♂ 6
	Electronics	♀ 17	♂ 32
	Leathercraft	♀ 7	♂ 21
	Rocket building	♀ 6	♂ 34
	Engine repair	♀ 2	♂ 31

*Numbers indicate percentages.

Television

The amount and kind of television viewing done by children has been the target of much discussion. How much time should be spent with television and what kind of programming is best are questions that will continue into the next decade. Certainly too much television can keep the early adolescent from the kinds of activities that promote mastery of the developmental tasks discussed previously. There has also been concern that some television personalities are not the kind of models that early adolescent should "try on" in the process of identity formation.

Early adolescents were asked questions about television in the first part of the interview. These questions allowed the youths to get used to the interview process and provided an easy topic about which to talk.

WHO WATCHES TV?

Almost 90 percent of the early adolescents interviewed said that they watched television everyday. Sixty-nine percent said that it was usually on in the afternoon and 49 percent reported that it was on during dinner.

WHAT EARLY ADOLESCENTS WATCH

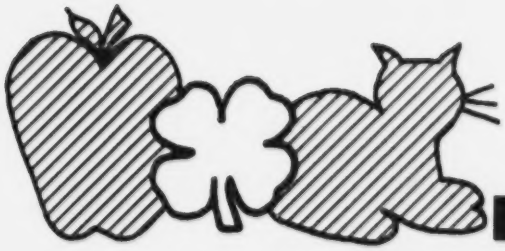
The programs that early adolescents said that they liked best were situation comedies and adventures. Almost 50 percent of the girls and 21 percent of the boys said that they watched the popular soap opera about which they were asked, a significant difference.***

When the youths were asked if there were programs that they were not allowed to watch, 51 percent of the girls and 42 percent of the boys said "yes." The kinds of shows that were prohibited were soaps, cable movies, horror shows, movies rated "R" and for which parental discretion was advised, and specific shows. Clearly, many parents are making and influencing the television viewing choices of early adolescents. On the other hand, only about one-half are doing so and this means that half of early adolescents are allowed to watch whatever they choose.

SELECTED TOPICS OF INTEREST TO THE 4-H — YOUTH PROGRAMS

Several topics addressed in the Michigan Early Adolescent Survey were of special interest to the 4-H - Youth Programs. In most cases, these topics were related to programming thrusts. The following brief reports discuss those topics.

54



HIGHLIGHTS: SELECTED TOPICS OF INTEREST TO THE 4-H — YOUTH PROGRAMS

EARLY ADOLESCENTS AND HANDICAPPERS

80 percent of the youths said that they would enjoy having a handicapper for a friend.

50 percent said that they would consider a career working with handicappers.

95 percent of the parents said that working with handicappers was an important skill for their children to learn.

EARLY ADOLESCENTS AND SCHOOL

Slightly more than half of girls said that they did well or very well in school; slightly more than half of boys said that they did fairly or poorly.

Almost 50 percent of the youths said that they liked school "some."

Girls were significantly more likely to have positive feelings about school than were boys.

EARLY ADOLESCENTS AND THEIR PETS

Almost 90 percent of the youths said that they had cared for a pet for longer than a month at some time in their lives.

94 percent of the parents said that caring for pets was important to the development of their children.

Almost one-half of the youths said that they played with their pets as a way of making themselves feel better when they were upset.

SNACKS AND NUTRITION

Over 63 percent of the youths make snacks every day.

Cookies were the most commonly eaten snack.

Boys were more likely to eat all kinds of snacks except fruit and cheese.

Girls (54%) and boys (45%) reported that they most often learn about nutrition at school.

Early Adolescents and Handicappers

How do early adolescents feel about differences when everything within and about them seems to be changing? Many people note the conformity of dress, hair style, taste in music, and other things common to early adolescents. Does this conformity influence adolescents' attitudes about people who are different from them? Specifically, what are their attitudes about handicappers?

Changes in public policies regarding the concept of normalcy and mainstreaming in public education mean that more early adolescents come into contact with handicappers in their homes, schools, and communities. Twenty-three percent of the MEAS families reported having a child with some type of a chronic illness, such as asthma, or a handicapping condition like mental retardation or hyperactivity.

YOUTHS' ATTITUDES TOWARD HANDICAPPERS

Early adolescent attitudes toward the chronically ill or handicappers were largely positive. Almost 80 percent said that they would enjoy having a handicapper for a friend. Over 50 percent said that they would consider a career that involved working with the handicappers or the elderly.

PARENTS' ATTITUDES TOWARD HANDICAPPERS

Parents were also interested in having their children learn skills to work with older people or handicappers. Over 95 percent felt that this was a skill their child should learn. However, almost 70 percent felt that they needed help from outside the home if their child were to learn this skill.

Early Adolescents and School

School has an impact on all of the developmental tasks of early adolescence. How early adolescents master the tasks also involves how they do in school and how they feel about it. The Michigan Early Adolescent Survey asked general questions which related to the tasks of achievement and identity.

Early adolescents were asked to rate how they did in reading, mathematics, and overall. They could choose from these answers: very well, well, fairly, or poorly.

OVERALL RATINGS

When asked how they did "overall" in school, 43 percent of the girls said that they did "well" in school, while 49 percent of the boys reported doing "fairly." Fourteen percent of all early adolescents said that they did very well, and 4 percent said that they did "poorly." When parents were asked the same question, their answers were similar to the youths' except that 19 percent of the mothers reported that their son was doing "poorly" (see Fig. 30).

READING

The differences between how girls said that they did in reading and how boys said that they did in reading were statistically significant.*** Almost one-half (48%) of the boys reported that they did "well" in reading. Another 31 percent said that they did either "fairly" or "poorly." Slightly over half of the girls said that they did "well" in reading (56%). Only 14 percent of them said that they did "fairly" or "poorly." In general, parents were less likely to say that their child was doing well in reading than was their child (see Fig. 31).

MATHEMATICS

Almost one-half (44%) of the boys reported that they did "well" in mathematics. Another 32 percent said that they did "fairly" or "poorly." Forty-eight percent of girls reported doing "well" in mathematics. As in reading, a smaller percentage of girls than boys reported doing "fairly" or "poorly" (27%). Parents' reports were very similar to those of the early adolescents (see Fig. 32.)

HOW EARLY ADOLESCENTS FEEL ABOUT SCHOOL

Early adolescents were asked how they felt about school. The response choices were: like it a lot, like it some, don't like it, and don't like it at all.

The differences between the answers of girls and boys as to how they felt about school were statistically significant.* Boys and girls were as likely to say that they liked school "some" (47%, 46%). A larger number of boys reported that they didn't like school or did not like it at all (28%) than girls (14%). About 16 percent more parents said that their early adolescents liked school than did their early adolescent.

FIGURE 30.

Ratings of overall academic achievement of early adolescents.

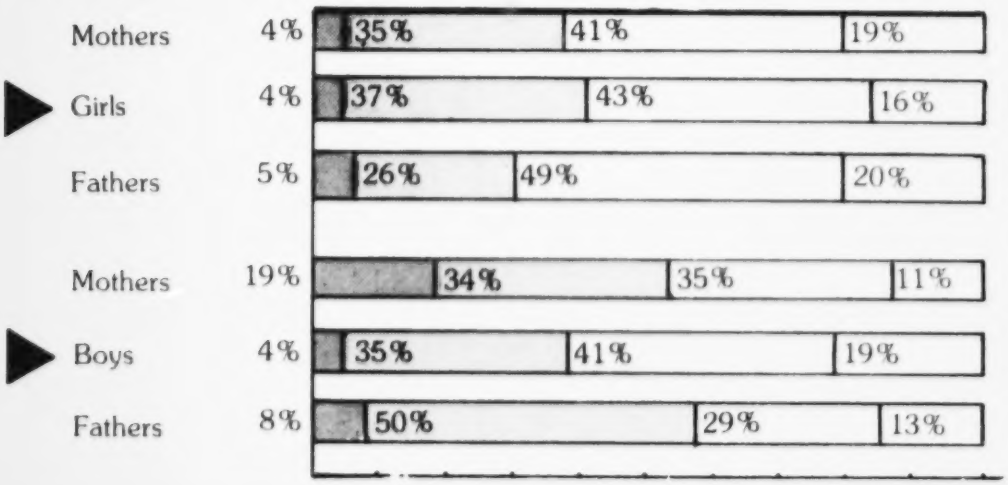


FIGURE 31.

Ratings of reading achievements of early adolescents.

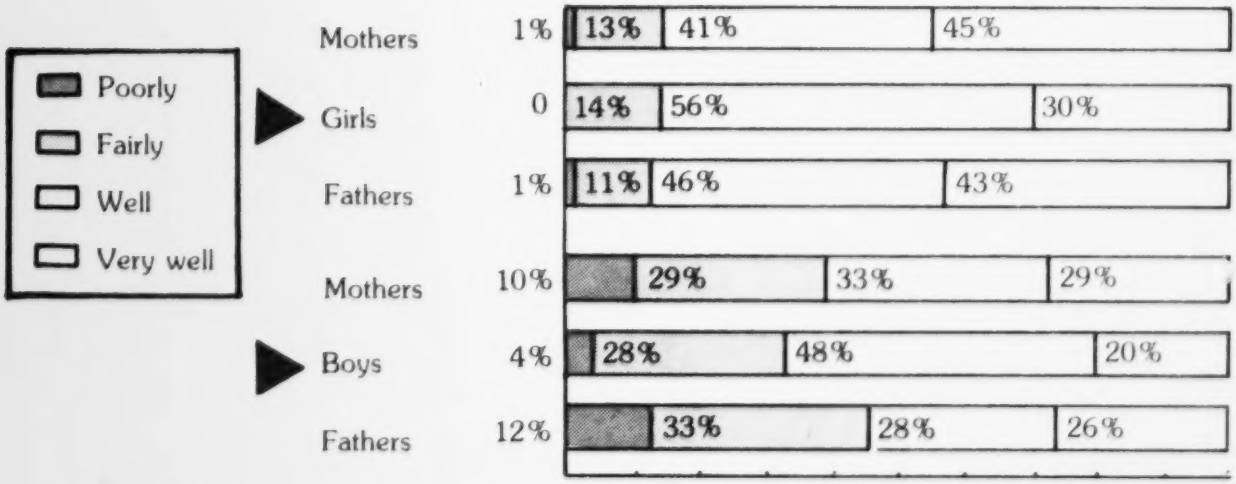
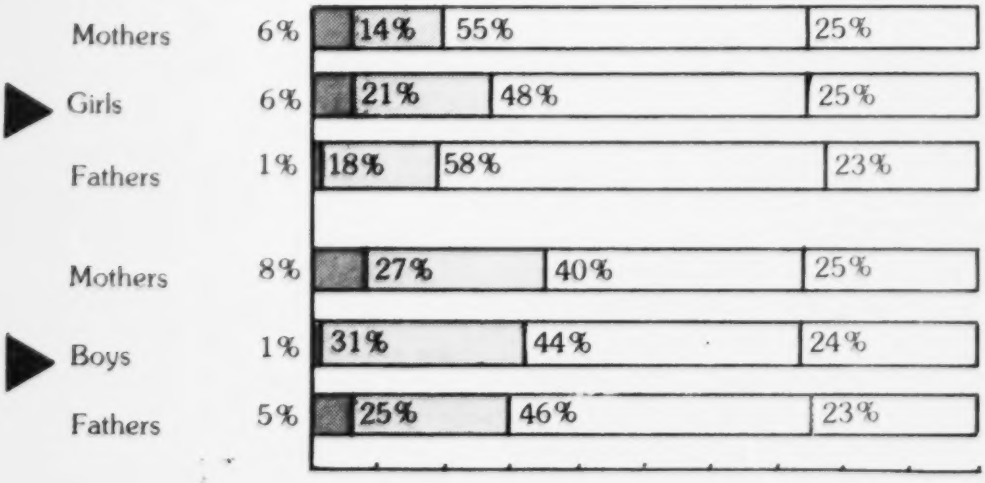


FIGURE 32.

Ratings of mathematics achievements of early adolescents.



Early Adolescents and Their Pets

Many parents and adults who work with early adolescents believe that it is beneficial for youths to have pets or to care for an animal. Most feel that this is an important way to develop responsibility--that developmental task of autonomy. There is also a belief that pets provide a "pal" with whom early adolescents can talk and play--perhaps something to work with on the task of identity.

In order to explore what roles pets do play in the life of early adolescents, the youths were asked a number of questions related to pets in order to look at other characteristics of early adolescence in relation to pet ownership.

WHO HAS PETS?

Almost 90 percent of the youths interviewed said that they had cared for an animal for a long period of time (a month or more). Dogs were the more frequently owned pet (40%). Girls were more likely to own cats than boys were. Boys were more likely to own a large animal (horses*****) than girls were. Other findings are:

1. Age made no difference in pet ownership.

2. There were no differences between rural and urban animal owners.

3. Understandably, owners of horses and other large animals lived in rural areas.

4. Families in higher income groups were more likely to own pets.

WHAT PET OWNERS GAIN FROM THEIR PETS

Ninety-four percent of the parents said that they believed that caring for pets was important to the development of their early adolescent. Their belief is confirmed by the fact that pet owners had higher self-esteem than adolescents who didn't own pets. However, they did not have better responsibility skills than early adolescents without pets.

Adolescents said that they gained much from pet ownership: responsibility skills, friendship, love, fun, and knowledge about animals. Rabbit and hamster owners were more likely to say that they gained responsibility. Dog, bird, horse, and fish owners were more likely to say that they received friendship, love, and fun as a result of their pet ownership.

EARLY ADOLESCENTS, STRESS, AND PETS

Over one-half of the youths said that they had had a pet die in the last year. When asked to what degree this affected them, 60 percent said "a lot," 29 percent said "a little," and 12 percent said "not at all." There were no differences based on gender.

Almost one-half of the early adolescents said that they played with their pets when they were upset. Another 26 percent said that they sometimes did. Pets seem to play an important part in how early adolescents cope with stress.

Snacks and Nutrition

The tremendous amount of growth during early adolescence puts heavy demands on the body. Good nutrition is important to the early adolescent's physical needs as well as to his/her psychological needs. Most youths do not appreciate this fact, however.

Questions were asked about how often early adolescents snacked and what snacks they were eating. They were also asked where, if anywhere, they had learned about nutrition.

HOW OFTEN DO YOUTHS SNACK?

Over 63 percent of the youths said that they make snacks after school or in the evening almost every day. An additional 34 percent said that they make snacks once in a while; less than 3 percent said that they never make snacks.

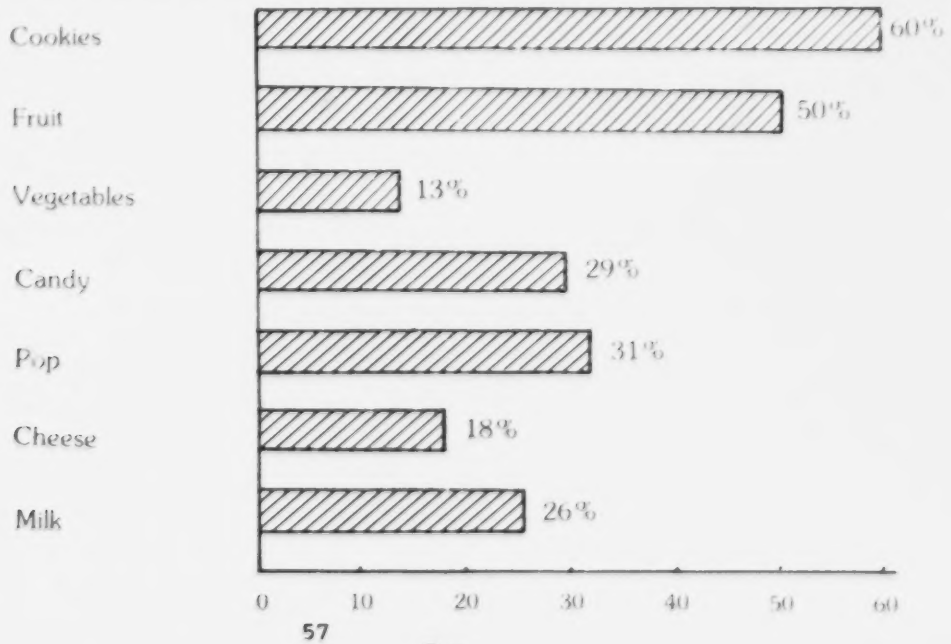
WHAT KINDS OF SNACKS ARE EATEN?

Cookies topped the list when early adolescents were asked what kinds of snacks they ate. The least eaten snacks of those on the list were vegetables and cheese. One-third of the youths reported that they snacked on soft drinks and one-fourth said that they drank milk as a snack. Boys were more likely to eat snacks in every category except fruit and cheese. These were more likely to be eaten by girls (see Fig. 33).

WHERE EARLY ADOLESCENTS LEARN ABOUT NUTRITION

Fifty-four percent of the girls and 45 percent of the boys said that they learned about nutrition from school. Nineteen percent that they learned about it from their parents, and 14 percent said that they learned about it from a combination of the two places.

FIGURE 33.
Snack preferences of early adolescents.



APPENDIX: Description of Sample

Early adolescents were chosen for this study using a stratified multi-stage cluster sampling technique and an equal probability selection method. This means that the study was conducted in such a way that all Michigan early adolescents in public and private schools who lived with their families had an equal chance of being chosen for the study. This also means that the sample provides reliable information about all Michigan early adolescents.

Twenty counties were chosen using the method described above. Two school districts were then chosen from each county. Student names were selected from lists provided from those school districts.

This sample included 304 youths--150 boys and 154 girls. There were 78 fifth graders, 70 sixth graders, 77 seventh graders, and 79 eighth graders. Of the 495 parents interviewed, 283 were mothers and 212 were fathers.

The sample and its relationship to the State of Michigan 1980 census information on families with early adolescents is described below.

Slightly more than half of the early adolescents who completed the survey were females. Three-fourths of the youths were evenly distributed over the ages of 11, 12, 13, and 14. These students were evenly distributed over grades five, six, seven, and eight.

Ninety-five percent of the youths lived with their natural mothers; 76 percent lived with their natural fathers. Almost 2 percent lived with adoptive mothers as well as adoptive fathers. Stepmothers accounted for 1 percent of the sample, and stepfathers accounted for almost 5 percent.

Eighty-two percent of the youths lived in two-parent homes. Sixteen percent lived only with their mother, and almost 2 percent lived only with their father. These proportions are very similar to the Michigan census data.

Eighty-three percent of the people in the sample were Caucasian. Blacks made up 16 percent of the sample, and slightly over 1 percent were Hispanics.

Almost one-third of the sample lived in a rural area; another 10 percent lived on farms. Eight percent lived in large cities of 100,000 or more persons, and 11 percent lived in the suburbs. The remaining 40 percent were divided almost equally among the following settings: small towns (under 5,000 people), towns (5,000-25,000 people), and cities.

The MEAS sample was very similar to the Michigan census information on income for families in this stage of the life cycle. Almost one-third of the households earned $20,001 to 30,000. Another third earned $30,001 to $55,000. One fifth earned $10,001 to $20,000. Fourteen percent earned under $10,000, and 5 percent earned more than $55,000.

The parents in the MEAS sample were more educated than the Michigan population of parents with early adolescents. Almost twice as many parents in the sample had attended graduate or professional school (MEAS: 12.5%; census: 6.9%). Almost twice as many MEAS parents were college graduates (MEAS: 13.1%;

census: 6.9%). Half again as many parents in the MEAS sample as in the Michigan census had some college education (MEAS: 29.4%; census: 20.5%) Thus fewer sample parents had a high school education only (MEAS: 31.9%; census: 43.1%). Fewer had attended some high school only (MEAS: 8%; census: 17.1.%), and fewer had ended their education at the eighth grade (MEAS: 5.2%; census: 7%).

In general, the sample parents were slightly older than the parents in the Michigan census. The majority of them were between 32 and 45 years of age: 23.8 percent were from 31-35 years, 31.7 percent were from 36-40, and 21.5 percent were from 41-45. Five percent of the parents were 30 or under. Slightly over 10 percent were between the ages of 46 and 50. Six percent were over 50.

Fathers were most likely to be employed by someone other than themselves (72.1%). Over half of the fathers reported doing skilled work. One-fifth of the fathers were professional people. Almost 15 percent were in management positions. Almost 20 percent were self-employed.

Twenty-seven percent of the mothers reported being full-time homemakers. Ten percent were self-employed, and 50 percent were employed by someone other than themselves. One-fifth of the mothers were employed in service positions; another third were in office work. Thirteen percent were professional people.